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SECRETS AND  
STORIES  
OF  
THE WAR



# SECRETS AND STORIES OF THE WAR Volume 1

A selection of the articles and  
book condensations in which  
The Reader's Digest  
recorded the Second World War

Foreword by Lieutenant-General Sir Brian Horrocks, KCB, KBE, DSO, MC, LL.D. (Hon)



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## FOREWORD

# THE NEWS THAT BECAME HISTORY

*By Lieutenant-General Sir Brian Horrocks*

MY FIRST sight of war was during the retreat from Mons in August 1914; my last was on the Cuxhaven peninsular, north of Bremen, in May 1945. Thirty-one years, 300 miles and a strange difference in attitudes separated those incidents.

During the Battle of the Aisne in 1914 I stood on a hill watching a mass of cavalry in the distance. A gunner observation officer at my side asked me whether they were French or German. My military education had not, up to then, included a study of foreign uniforms; I thought they were Germans, but I wasn't sure. "Well," he said, "it's too good a target to miss"—and very soon shells were scattering the horsemen.

Thirty-one years later my 30 Corps was mopping up the German forces round Cuxhaven when I was given the top-secret news that the enemy was negotiating for surrender. I spent the last few hours of my active command discreetly trying to prevent any more casualties, persuading my divisional commanders not to be too venturesome and to keep out of trouble. I could see them looking at me with astonishment, no doubt thinking "the old man's lost his nerve at last."

These incidents express a great difference between the First and Second World Wars. In the first, the casualties were ghastly; during the first day of the Battle of the Somme in July 1916, our casualties were well over 50,000, and the gains were negligible. (In those days



the life of a subaltern was reckoned to be three weeks. I was lucky; I lasted six before I was wounded and taken prisoner.)

During the second war most commanders had vivid memories of this carnage, and we were always seeking ways to protect the infantry with tanks and covering fire. We were accused of wasting ammunition; of pouring down shells haphazardly before an attack. Quite so; it was better to waste a ton of ammunition than chance one man's life.

If a general had imagination (and I always thought I had a bit too much), the responsibility for lives was agonizing. I remember being asked during the Reichswald Battle whether I wanted the town of Cleve "taken out." Cleve was a lovely old Rhineland town—where Anne of Cleves, Henry VIII's fourth wife, was born—and it had a large civilian population; "taken out" meant razed. But I knew that the town was astride the only enemy supply route; it was our lives or theirs. So Cleve was "taken out."

This sort of situation cannot be avoided in war, and it makes command such a horrible business. In the higher realms of strategy there may well be less personal involvement, because men tend to become statistics. I am no strategist, and as a corps commander I lived beside the men who were actually doing the fighting. But I must admit that, agonizing though it was, I wouldn't have chosen any other way of living through the war.

This is probably why I have so much enjoyed reading the articles in this book. They deal with the war as I understood it. The people on these pages are men I might have known, not just heads at a roll-call; the battles are those I might have fought, not just plays on the chess-board of war.

There are many stories here of men who came from nowhere to be heroes, like the sailors and boatmen who got us out of Dunkirk, and Richard Hillary, one of the first of the Few. As a professional soldier I was fascinated to watch the impact of war on men such as these. "Bullets change everything" is a truism we quickly learned.

We discovered that the loud-voiced NCO who had bounced round the peace-time barrack square was not always quite so evident when the bullets began to fly, and in his place emerged some quiet little fellow whose natural authority suddenly appeared when the battle was fiercest.

The forward area of a battlefield, whether it's on land, sea or in the air, is the most exclusive club in the world, and it's there that wars are won by ordinary down-to-earth people, sleepless and bored, slogging through cold and rain. Oddly, you always see the same people up at the front, and they seem comparatively few. I remember arriving to take command of 30 Corps in Normandy and spotting countless friendly, familiar faces I knew from the desert campaign jutting out of tank turrets. I commented on this to one of my staff officers. "General," he said, "you always meet the same people battle-fighting."

I count myself lucky to have been battle-fighting with so many fine Commonwealth units. The first time I fought with Canadian troops was during the Reichswald Battle—and there they earned two VC's! And I have many happy memories of co-operation with the South Africans, the New Zealanders and those tough Australians. After Alamein I congratulated General Morshead on a magnificent piece of fighting by his Australian division. "Thank you, General," he said. "The boys were interested." That's the sort of man you meet at the "sharp end" of a battle.

To make a large generalization I would say that in an average group of ten fighting men, two are leaders, seven follow and one would much rather not be there at all. This book has many stories about the very brave men who went out on special missions—the spies and saboteurs, and the irregulars like Paddy Leigh-Fermor, who kidnapped General Kreipe from Crete, and David Stirling, who drove round the Egyptian desert blasting the Germans from a jeep. As a corps commander I was always a little alarmed when men were asked to volunteer for such cloak-and-dagger affairs. For these

special jobs were done at the expense of my corps' efficiency; the volunteers were always the men who would have been the natural leaders in the battles we were fighting.

It is an interesting fact that this irregular warfare was almost entirely a speciality of the Allies. This book recounts the weird story of one German attempt at playing this game, "When Hitler Invaded America." It was a singularly unsuccessful venture, while our war archives recall countless hair-raising schemes that worked. This suggests, I suppose, a difference in national outlooks. The Germans, with their superb discipline and respect for order, just didn't understand free-booting; men from the Allied countries, with their love of freedom and individualism, were more often prepared to take on unorthodox, lone-wolf adventures.

It has been argued, with some justification, that there were too many irregular private armies operating behind the enemy lines. But considering the small cost of their upkeep I am sure they made a worthwhile contribution, particularly in Burma.

For one thing, these activities had a marvellous effect on morale. The Chindits, operating miles behind the Japanese lines, and the American Rangers, who fought alongside near-savages of the Kachin tribe, did much to raise the spirits of the troops who were to fight the later and bigger battles over the same ground. Units such as these, often trained and led by Gurkhas and men of the British Frontier Force, proved that the Japanese could be beaten at their own game of jungle warfare.

The war in the Far East was very different from the operations in the desert and Europe. It offered little scope for tactical skill in command, and it was rarely possible to co-ordinate large numbers of men and weapons on a wide front, as happened in the more "civilized" war that I took part in. The problems facing men like Mountbatten and Slim were how to accustom westerners to an enemy who had an Asiatic disregard for death, and how to keep up the morale of their men. It was one of the most notable feats of

the war that somehow Australian, British and US troops overcame their misery and learned to endure the appalling conditions of the jungle.

We learned a lot about the techniques of raising spirits and boosting morale in the last war. My own aim was to see that the troops knew what they were doing; if the battle was explained to them, then they could always be relied upon to give of their best. And if they could be told as well that the navy had just sunk the *Scharnhorst* or given one of their other fearless displays, so much the better.

In war as in peace, the Press has a big part to play in promoting morale and I am glad to meet again on the pages of this book my good friends, the war correspondents.

In my corps, dealing with the Press was a two-way traffic. Soldiers like to know that their battles are properly and accurately reported, and I gave correspondents all the help I could, telling them quite frankly what was going on. But they were also able to help me. A corps commander couldn't be everywhere at once, but quite often the group of war correspondents that came to my headquarters in the evening had, between them, a complete picture of what was going on all along the front. I would ask them what they thought about the situation. "Well, General," one of them might say, "so-and-so division is getting very tired." Or "I think you may have to watch such-and-such formation for this reason or that." Then I would go and have a look for myself and find, perhaps, that these units had seen so much fighting that it would be wise to withdraw them from the front for a few days.

The war was very well reported, and I am delighted to see that this book includes many of those stirring eye-witness reports that were telephoned and cabled from the front-lines by such men as Allan Michie and Quentin Reynolds. With hindsight we know that they were often too close to the subject to give a complete picture of what was going on, and we are now able to put the news that became history into perspective. But there is the smell of battle about these

reports and a much more potent reminder of the war I knew than has since been produced by the arm-chair war historians.

When I look back on those years, I am often horrified at the magnitude of the task we undertook in 1939. What fantastic good fortune it was that German tanks didn't follow us down to the beaches at Dunkirk! What a debt we owe the British, Canadian and US Navies who somehow kept the Atlantic supply routes open!

It seems to me now that Germany could have won the war but for Hitler. Frederic Sondern describes "The Last Days of Adolf Hitler" in this book and tells how, even when the Fuehrer had been revealed as a madman, his authority was complete. This was the fascination of that evil man.

Take, for instance, his control over the German General Staff. Here was an extremely efficient and completely self-contained autocracy—a class that ruled by divine right. Yet Hitler had them absolutely cowed. In dozens of cases the Fuehrer took military decisions against their advice, and was proved wrong. He tried to fight tactical battles from a remote headquarters (an impossible thing to do, as Rommel well knew); his intervention during the Battle of Stalingrad, a turning-point of the war, cost the Germans fearful losses from which they never really recovered; his handling of the defence of German-occupied Europe was time and again against the better judgment of his army commanders. . . . And yet, right to the end, they went on doing just what they were told.

Clearly Hitler's biggest mistake was on the Russian front. When his armies marched east they were welcomed by the Russian peasants, who had had enough of Stalin and his collectivization programme. Many Russians laid down their arms and volunteered for the German army, and many fought and died on the Axis side.

The fighting troops went on towards Moscow. But when they retreated over the same ground they were hated and harried. Why? It was because Hitler's political troops had been there in the meantime, carting off men to the slave labour camps and practising

the most odious barbarities of the Nazi regime. If the war in the east had been left to the forward troops, I honestly believe that the Russian front would have crumbled.

Thank God it didn't. In fact the crumbling that I saw was, surprisingly, on the Nazi side. This was one of the enigmas of the war. When they were fighting set-piece battles, the Germans were superb, but once the command structure had been destroyed they were beaten. When, to our astonishment, enemy resistance in North Africa suddenly collapsed, our great problem was how to handle the huge number of prisoners that came pouring in. Whole units surrendered unexpectedly, even though they had plenty of food and ammunition. The point was that they were without leaders.

It was the same in the German homeland. We entered towns to find white sheets flapping from every window. I often used to wonder what would have happened if my corps had been a German one advancing through Kent. I am quite sure that there would have been Home Guards fighting with a variety of weapons at every crossroads, and the British housewives would have been much more likely to have had pitchforks in their hands than white flags.

This German reaction to defeat is all the more surprising when one remembers just how stoically the people bore the endless Allied bombing that reduced whole cities to rubble.

There is a report by Allan Michie in this book describing how, towards the end of the war, enemy production was brought to a standstill through the day and night attention of Allied bombers. We know now that the bombing offensive was nothing like as effective in the early years of the war as we—and Michie—thought at the time. This was mainly because the German people, under forceful leadership, proved calmer, more stoical and much more determined than we had thought possible.

But in my view the continuous Allied strategic air offensive was the most important operation of the war. Apart from the devastation caused, its effect on Allied morale was great. And, of course,

our non-stop offensive tended to shift air warfare from Britain to Germany so that enemy fighter planes became increasingly involved in defensive operations over their own country rather than in offensive raids. As a result our tactical air forces had established virtual air supremacy over the battlefields by the spring of 1943, and this must have shortened the war by several years.

We front-line troops were well aware of the way the war in the air was going. For instance, after the capture of Tunis on 7th May 1943, secure in the knowledge that the German Air Force had been driven from the African skies, I was able to order the 6th Armoured Division to seal off the remnants of the enemy formations in the Cape Bon peninsular, with our vehicles moving nose to tail and two abreast—a highly dangerous undertaking if there had been any enemy aircraft about.

Nor shall I ever forget my first sight of the Normandy beaches at the beginning of August 1944. From the air the area just behind the beaches looked like a dusty ant-heap, with stores, troops and vehicles moving about in every direction. And all the time Allied aircraft were taking off and landing on strips that had been hewn out of the Normandy countryside. But for our complete domination of the air we would never have dared to risk such concentrations of men and materials. The air power at our command made it almost impossible for German reinforcements to move into Normandy by day, and I am firmly convinced that the airmen did more to defeat the German armies than any action that was fought on the ground.

At some time or another, almost every front-line soldier begins to wonder, "Is nobody else fighting this war?" But, as the years passed, there were constant reminders of the marvellous spirit among the varying services and Allies. Very few of us will forget the evacuation from Crete, early on in the war, when the navy's losses were so large as to threaten the whole balance of power in the Mediterranean. Field-Marshal Wavell felt he could not expect the navy to continue the operation, but Admiral Cunningham insisted.

"If the navy puts the army ashore," he said, "they must be prepared to take them off." A good many men owe their lives to that decision and the sailors who carried it out.

As the breakout from Normandy gathered momentum we soldiers discovered that we had other friends—the underground fighters of Europe. On 26th August 1944, when I was ordered to advance with 30 Corps from the Seine to Brussels, Montgomery impressed on me that speed was essential in order to prevent the Germans from organizing defensive positions on the Somme or on any of the other waterways that stretched across our path.

We covered 250 miles in six days against scattered German defences. Our speed was maintained largely because of the men of the Resistance, whose stories are given their rightful place in this book. Everywhere they leaped into action as we approached, taking over the prisoners, providing guides, guarding bridges and vulnerable points. On a later occasion, during the Battle of Arnhem, the fire of my whole corps artillery was at one point controlled by a Dutch Resistance worker operating a wireless set and observing enemy movements from an attic window behind the German lines.

The war was many things to many men. A group with whom I had every sympathy were the prisoners of war. Their plight was one with which I am all too familiar, as I spent four years trying to escape from German camps during the First World War. I even took part in several attempts to tunnel to freedom, though none of them were as ambitious as the break-out from Stalag Luft III, which Paul Brickhill describes in this book. I can remember to this day my bitter disappointment at being recaptured by German frontier guards within 500 yards of Holland after covering 200 miles by myself across Germany from a POW camp in the Hartz mountains.

Looking back now I realize that the real importance lay not in whether we actually succeeded in our attempts to escape or not, but in the fact that for four years our lives were devoted to one thing only—how to outwit the Germans and escape—with the result



that we returned home after the war having suffered little ill effect from our time in prison. Others, who allowed themselves to sink into despondency, deteriorated physically and mentally almost day by day, and many of them have never recovered since.

All the rubble and destruction of the war put together does not promote in our minds the sympathy we feel for just one man destroyed in this way. But there are many men who came out of the war bigger and better people than when they went in. The years 1939 to 1945 were loathsome ones, but there can be few of us who do not have a memory of fine people encountered or moments of comradeship shared during that time. Now we can feel again a stir of pride and a sense of wonderment at the selfless heroism and devotion shown by the men—and women—whose stories are told in this book.

Brian S. Horne



Sir Brian Horrocks, seen here talking to troops of the 52nd Scottish Lowland Division after the capture of Bremen, was one of the outstanding corps commanders of the last war. He led 13 Corps, 10 Corps and 9 Corps in Africa, and, after recovering from wounds received when he was strafed by a low-flying German fighter at Bizerta, he commanded 30 Corps of the British Liberation Army in Europe.

Between the wars, Sir Brian fought for the White Russian armies against the Bolsheviks in Siberia, and was for a time Chief Instructor at the Staff College, Camberley. In 1924 he represented Britain in the modern pentathlon event of the Olympic Games in Paris.

Sir Brian retired from the army in 1949 and for the next fourteen years was Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, the official responsible to the Queen for the smooth running of the House of Lords. He is well-known to television audiences in Britain, Canada and Australia for his programmes on military history.

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THIRD SUPPLEMENT

TO

# The London Gazette

OF FRIDAY the 1st of SEPTEMBER 1939

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Privy Council Office  
3rd September 1939

IT IS NOTIFIED THAT A STATE OF WAR EXISTS BETWEEN HIS MAJESTY AND GERMANY AS FROM 11 O'CLOCK A.M. TO DAY THE 3RD SEPTEMBER 1939.

On the instructions of His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin addressed on 1st September a communication to the German Government in the following terms:—

Early this morning the German Chancellor issued a proclamation to the German Army which indicated clearly that he was about to attack Poland.

Information which has reached His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the French Government indicates that German troops have crossed the Polish frontier and that attacks upon Polish towns are proceeding.

In these circumstances it appears to the Governments of the United Kingdom and France that by their action the German Government have created conditions (viz. an

use of force against Poland threatening the independence of Poland) which call for the implementation by the Governments of the United Kingdom and France of the undertaking to Poland to come to her assistance.

I am accordingly to inform Your Lordship that unless the German Government are prepared to give His Majesty's Government satisfactory assurances that the German Government has suspended all aggressive action against Poland and are prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will without hesitation fulfil their obligations to Poland.

At 9.30 a.m. on 3rd September His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin addressed a communication to the German Government in the following terms:—

In the communication which I had the honour to make to you on 1st September I informed you on the instructions of His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that unless the German Government were prepared to give His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom satisfactory assurances that the German Government had

The beat of goose-stepping jackboots and the rumble of tanks are heard in Europe... and Britain announces "that a State of War exists between His Majesty and Germany as from 11 o'clock a.m. today, the 3rd September, 1939"



## Hitler On The March

*By William L. Shirer*

AT DAYBREAK on 1st September 1939, on a flimsy, invented pretext, German armies poured across the Polish frontier and converged on Warsaw from the north, south and west.

In Berlin, the people in the streets were apathetic, despite the immensity of the news which greeted them in the morning newspapers. Perhaps they were simply dazed at waking up to find themselves in a war which they had been sure the Fuehrer would somehow avoid. Even the robot members of the Reichstag, hacks whom Hitler had appointed, failed to respond with much enthusiasm as the dictator launched into his explanation of why Germany found itself at war. There was far less cheering than on previous and less important occasions. Hitler seemed strangely on the defensive, and throughout the speech ran a curious strain, as though he himself were dazed at the fix he had got himself into and felt a little desperate about it.

But now there was no way out. On 3rd September, Britain and France declared war on Germany. That same night, at 9 p.m., the German submarine U-30 torpedoed and sank the British liner *Athenia* some 200 miles west of the Hebrides; 112 passengers lost their lives. . . . The war had begun.

Brave and valiant and foolhardy though the Poles were—at one point they actually counter-attacked Nazi tanks with cavalry—they were simply overwhelmed by the German onslaught. This

was their, and the world's, first experience of the *blitzkrieg*, the sudden surprise attack—the fighter planes and bombers roaring overhead, spreading flame and terror; the Stukas whining screams as they dived; the tanks, whole divisions of them, breaking through and thrusting forward thirty or forty miles in a day; and the incredible speed of even the infantry, indeed of the whole vast army of a million and a half men on motorized wheels, co-ordinated through a maze of electronic communications. This was a mechanized juggernaut such as the earth had never seen.

Within forty-eight hours the Polish Air Force was destroyed and in one week the Polish Army was vanquished, most of its thirty-five divisions either shattered or caught in a pincer movement that closed on Warsaw.

By 17th September all the Polish forces, except a mere handful on the Russian border, were surrounded. All was over except the dying in the broken ranks of Polish units which still, with incredible fortitude, held out.

IT WAS NOW time for the Russians, Germany's partners in a cynical non-aggression pact, to move in on the stricken country to grab a share of the spoils.

The Kremlin, like every other seat of government, had been taken by surprise at the rapidity with which the German armies had hurtled through Poland. Their success was most embarrassing to the Russians. On what pretext could they now intervene against the fallen state?

On 17th September there was disagreement between the two unnatural partners over the text of a joint communiqué which would "justify" the Russo-German destruction of Poland. Stalin objected to the German version because "it presented the facts all too frankly." Whereupon he wrote out his own version, a masterpiece of subterfuge, and forced the Germans to accept it. It stated that the joint aim of Germany and Russia was "to restore peace and order in Poland, which has been destroyed by the disintegration

of the Polish state, and to help the Polish people to establish new conditions for its political life." On that shabby pretext, beginning on the morning of 17th September, Russia trampled over a prostrate Poland. The next day Soviet troops met the Germans at Brest-Litovsk.

So Poland, like Austria and Czechoslovakia before it, disappeared from the map of Europe.

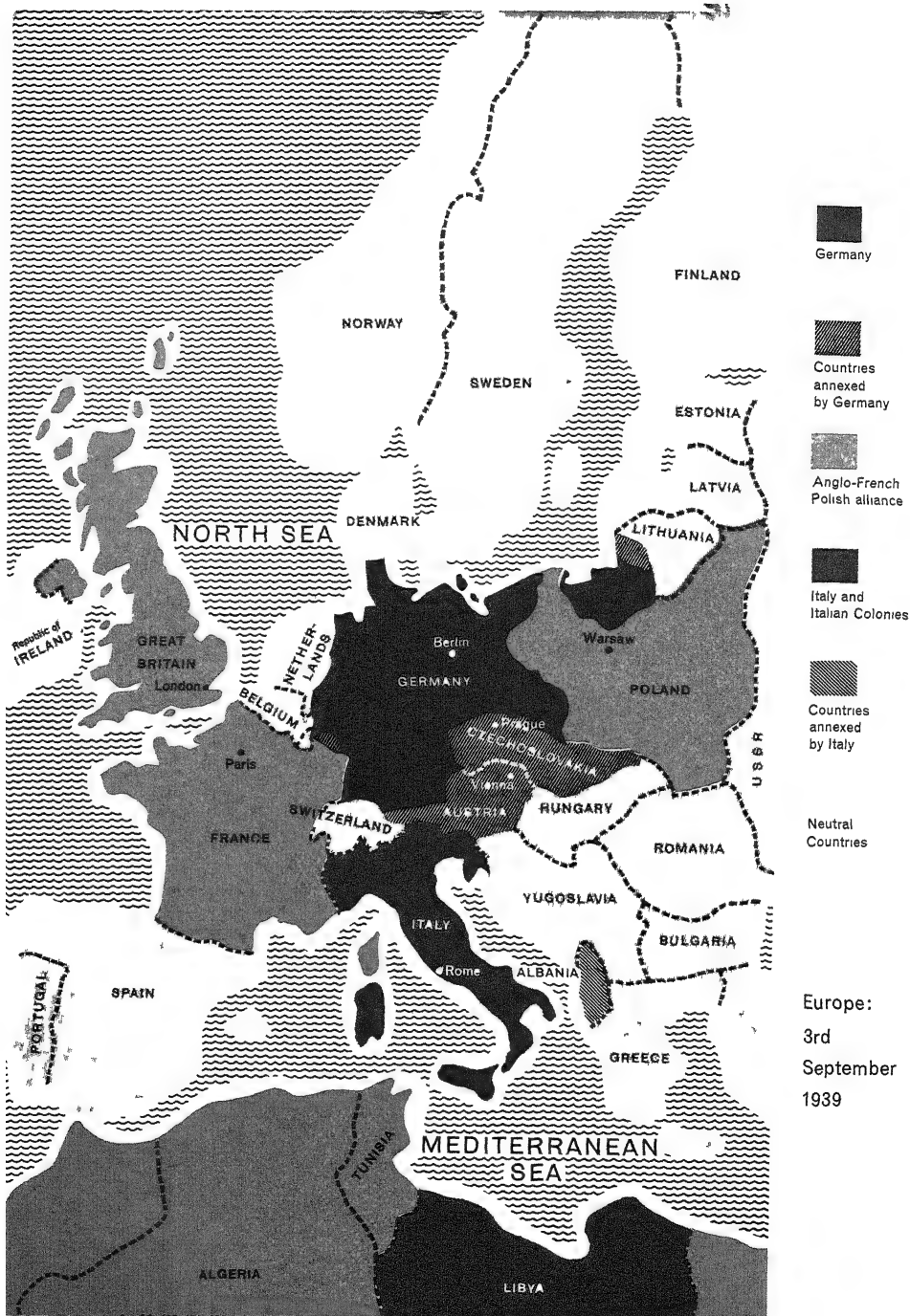
Now Hitler turned his attention to the Western Front.

Nothing much had happened there. Hardly a shot had been fired. The German man in the street was beginning to call it the "sit-down war"—*sitzkrieg*. In the west it would soon be dubbed the "phoney war". Here was the French Army, "the strongest in the world," as Britain's General J. F. C. Fuller put it, "facing no more than twenty-six German divisions, sitting still and sheltering behind steel and concrete while a quixotically valiant ally was being exterminated!"

For the West, the inaction was costly. As General Halder said at Nuremberg, "The success against Poland was only made possible by almost completely barring our western border. The French would have been able to cross the Rhine without our being able to prevent it." Why then did not the French Army, which had overwhelming superiority over the German forces in the west, attack, as General Gamelin and the French Government had promised the Poles in writing it would?

There were many reasons: defeatism in the French High Command, the Government and the people; the memories of how France had been bled white in the First World War and a determination not to suffer such slaughter again if it could be avoided; the realization by mid-September that the Polish armies were so badly defeated that the Germans would soon be able to move superior forces to the west and therefore in all probability wipe out any initial French advances; and the increasing fear of German superiority in arms and in the air.

But now the opportunity for any effective offensive had been



## HITLER ON THE MARCH

lost. With the Polish armies destroyed, Hitler could turn his full attention, and the bulk of his forces, to the west. Against the advice of his generals, who wanted time to refit the tanks used in Poland, the Fuehrer issued directive No. 6 for the conduct of the war:

### TOP SECRET

Preparations are to be made for an attack through Luxembourg, Belgium and Holland at as early a date as possible.

IN THE MEANTIME, plans for a daring German assault on two other little neutral states farther to the north had been ripening in Berlin and now took priority. The phoney war, so far as the Germans were concerned, was coming to an end with the approach of spring.

The innocent-sounding code name for the latest plan of German aggression was *Weseruebung*: or "Weser Exercise." It was the brain-child of the navy, which had long had its eyes on the north. Since Germany had no direct access to the wide ocean, the naval officers felt they needed bases in Norway to forestall a British blockade (which during the First World War had effectively bottled up the German Navy in the North Sea). Such bases would be vitally useful in protecting vessels carrying shipments of Swedish iron-ore, on which Germany's very existence depended.

It was concern for Germany's supplies of Swedish iron-ore that persuaded Hitler to adopt the plan. On 1st March he issued the formal directive for Weser Exercise. Denmark had now definitely been added to the list of Hitler's victims; the air force had its eyes on bases there to be used against Britain.

*Weseruebung* was ordered to begin at 5.15 a.m. on 9th April 1940. At precisely an hour before dawn on that day, the German envoys in Copenhagen and Oslo presented to the Danish and Norwegian Governments a German ultimatum demanding that they accept on the instant, and without resistance, the "protection of the Reich." The ultimatum was possibly the most brazen document so far



composed by the Fuehrer and Ribbentrop, his Foreign Minister.

The Danes were in a hopeless position. Their pleasant, flat little country was incapable of defence against Hitler's panzers. The army fought a few skirmishes, but by the time the Danes had finished their breakfasts, it was all over. The king, on the advice of his government, capitulated and ordered resistance to cease.

But in Norway things were different. Although by noon on the first day of operations the five principal towns and ports and the one big airfield along the west and south coasts were in German hands, King Haakon refused to give up.

Driven into exile from his capital, pressed to surrender and approve a government headed by the pro-Nazi traitor Vidkun Quisling, Haakon assembled the members of the government and told them: "I cannot accept the German demands. If the government should decide to accept them, abdication will be the only course open to me."

The government, though there may have been some waverers, could not be less courageous than the king, and it quickly rallied behind him.

That evening from a feeble little rural radio station, the only available means of communication with the outside world, the Norwegian Government flung down the gauntlet to the mighty Third Reich and called upon the people to resist the invaders. There were only three million of them—but there was now hope that British troops might arrive to help them.

Britain had prepared a small expeditionary force for Norway, but was unaccountably slow in getting troops under way. By late April the southern half of Norway, comprising all the main towns, had been irretrievably lost. But northern Norway seemed secure. By 28th May an Allied force of 25,000 men had driven the Germans out of Narvik. There seemed no reason to doubt that Hitler would be deprived of both his iron-ore and his objective of occupying the whole of Norway.

But when the Wehrmacht struck with stunning force on the

Western Front, every Allied soldier was needed to plug the gap. Narvik was abandoned, the Allied troops were hastily re-embarked, and King Haakon and his government transported to London.

Despite his amazing successes the Fuehrer had his bad moments during the Norwegian campaign. General Jodl's diary is crammed with terse entries recounting a succession of the warlord's nervous crises. Hitler had a fit of hysteria about the loss of Narvik, and for the first time the Wehrmacht commanders had a foretaste of how their demonic Fuehrer cracked under the strain of even minor setbacks in battle. It was a weakness which would grow on him when, after a series of further astonishing military successes, the tide of war changed, and it would contribute mightily to the eventual débâcle of the Third Reich.

Still, the quick conquest of Denmark and Norway had been an important victory. It secured the winter iron-ore route, brought Hitler air bases hundreds of miles closer to the main enemy and, perhaps most important of all, it immensely enhanced the military prestige of the Third Reich. Nazi Germany seemed invincible.

But there was one military result of the Scandinavian adventure which could not be evaluated at once. German naval losses were heavy: ten out of twenty destroyers, three out of eight cruisers, plus two battle cruisers and a pocket battleship were damaged so severely that they were out of action for several months. Hitler had no fleet worthy of mention when the time to invade Britain came, as it did shortly, and this proved an insurmountable handicap.

The possible consequences of the crippling of the German Navy did not enter the Fuehrer's thoughts, however, as, at the beginning of May, he worked with his generals on the last-minute preparations for what they were confident would be the greatest conquest of all.

SHORTLY after dawn on 10th May 1940, the Belgian Ambassador and the Minister of the Netherlands in Berlin were informed that German troops were entering their countries "to safeguard their neutrality against an imminent attack by the Anglo-French armies"

—the same hollow excuse that had been made only a month before with Denmark and Norway. A formal German ultimatum called upon the two governments to see to it that no resistance was offered; if it were, it would be crushed.

Britain and France were caught napping; London was pre-occupied with a Cabinet crisis which was resolved only on the evening of 10th May with the replacement of Chamberlain by Churchill as Prime Minister. Nevertheless, the Allied plan to meet the German attack in Belgium went ahead for the first couple of days almost without a hitch. A great Anglo-French army rushed north-eastward to man the main Belgian defence line along the Dyle and Meuse rivers. As it happened, this was just what the German High Command wanted. Though the Anglo-French armies did not know it, they sped directly into a trap that, when sprung, would prove utterly disastrous.

As the battle began, the two sides were evenly matched in numbers—136 German divisions against 135 divisions of the British, French, Belgians and Dutch. The defenders had the advantage of vast defensive fortifications—the impenetrable Maginot Line in the south, the Belgian forts in the middle, and fortified water lines in Holland in the north. Even in the number of tanks, the Allies matched the Germans. But they had not concentrated them as had the latter and, because of the Dutch and Belgians' suicidal pre-war policy of strict neutrality, there had been no staff consultations which would have enabled the defenders to pool their resources to the best advantage.

The Germans had a unified command, the initiative of the attacker, a contagious confidence in themselves and a daring plan. This was to launch the main German assault in the centre, through the Ardennes, with a massive armoured force which would then cross the Meuse north of Sedan, break out into the open country and race to the Channel at Abbeville.

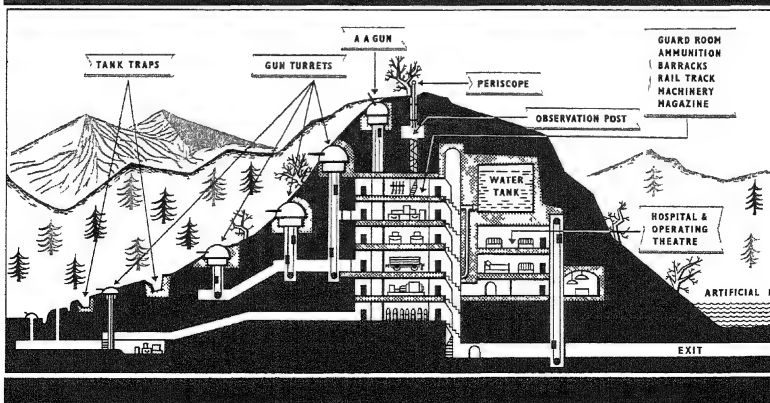
Such a strike would hit the Allies where they least expected it, since their generals probably, like most of the Germans, considered



A Belgian mother and her child set out to join the streams of refugees



With bombs away and machine-guns co a Stuka dive-bomber screams into the a



The Maginot Line was "impregnable"—so the German forces by-passed

this hilly, wooded country unsuitable for tanks. A feint by the right wing of the German forces would bring both the British and French armies rushing pell-mell into Belgium. Then by cracking through the French at Sedan and heading west for the Channel, the Germans would trap the major Anglo-French forces and the Belgian Army.

It was a daring plan, not without its risks, as several generals emphasized. But by now Hitler, who considered himself a military genius, practically believed that it was his own idea (it had actually been proposed by a gifted and imaginative staff officer of relatively junior rank, against considerable opposition), and the Fuehrer's enthusiasm for it ensured its adoption.

The attack began along a front of 175 miles, from the North Sea to the Maginot Line. For the Germans everything went according to the book, or even better than the book. Hitler's generals were confounded by the lightning rapidity and the extent of their own victories. As for the Allied leaders, they were quickly paralysed by developments they had not faintly expected and could not—in the utter confusion that ensued—comprehend.

Seven divisions of tanks concentrated at one point, the weakest position in the western defences, were responsible for the big breakthrough. Other factors were the Stuka dive-bombers, and the parachutists and airborne troops who landed far behind the Allied lines or on top of their seemingly impregnable forts and wrought havoc.

By the time the Dutch surrendered on 14th May, the die was cast for Belgium, France and the British Expeditionary Force. Though it was only the fifth day of the attack, it was the fatal day. The previous evening the German armour had secured four bridge-heads across the River Meuse, captured Sedan and gravely threatened the centre of the Allied line and the pivot on which the flower of the British and French armies had wheeled into Belgium.

Winston Churchill himself, who had taken over as Prime Minister on the first day of battle, was dumbfounded. He was awakened at half-past seven on the morning of 15th May by a

telephone call from Paul Reynaud, the new French Premier, who told him in an excited voice, "We have been defeated! We are beaten!" Churchill refused to believe it. The great French Army vanquished in less than a week? It was impossible. "I did not comprehend," he wrote later, "the violence of the revolution effected since the last war by the incursion of a mass of fast-moving armour."

It was on 14th May that the avalanche began. An army of tanks, unprecedented in warfare for size, concentration, mobility and striking power, broke through the French armies and headed swiftly for the Channel, behind the Allied forces in Belgium. So enormous was the striking force that, when it started through the Ardennes forest from the German frontier on 10th May, it stretched in three columns back for 100 miles behind the Rhine.

PRECEDED BY waves of Stuka dive-bombers, this phalanx of steel and fire could not be stopped by any means in the hands of the bewildered defenders. At Sedan two tank divisions poured across a pontoon bridge and struck towards the west. By evening of that day the German bridgehead was thirty miles wide and fifteen miles deep, and the French forces in the vital centre of the Allied line were shattered. The Franco-British armies to the north, and the twenty-two divisions of Belgians, were in dire danger of being cut off.

By the afternoon of 16th May German spearheads were sixty miles west of Sedan, rolling along the undefended open country. Nothing very much stood between them and Paris, or between them and the Channel. The French had no forces with which to stage a counter-attack. Though the panzer divisions received orders to do no more than proceed with "a reconnaissance in force," this was all they needed.

By the morning of 19th May, a mighty wedge of seven armoured divisions was only some fifty miles from the Channel. On the evening of 20th May, to the surprise of Hitler's headquarters, the 2nd Panzer Division reached Abbeville, at the mouth of the Somme. The Belgians, the British Expeditionary Force and three French

armies were trapped. By 24th May the British, French and Belgian armies in the north were compressed into a relatively small triangle, and there was no hope of breaking out. The only hope, and it seemed a slim one, was possible evacuation by sea from Dunkirk.

It was at this juncture that the German armour, now within sight of Dunkirk, and poised for the final kill, received a strange—and, to the soldiers in the field, inexplicable—order to halt their advance. It was the first of the German High Command's major mistakes of the war, and it provided a vital reprieve for the Allies, leading to the miracle of Dunkirk.

But it did not save the Belgians. Although his army fought magnificently, King Leopold surrendered, against the advice of his government, early in the morning of 28th May.

Despite this additional setback, the British were still determined to fight to the end.

Hitler and his generals did not dream that, right under their very noses, the maritime-minded British people could evacuate a third of a million men from the small battered port and the exposed beaches of Dunkirk.

It was not until 30th May that the German High Command woke up to what was happening. For four days Nazi communiqués had been reiterating that the encircled enemy army was doomed. Yet by dawn on 2nd June, only 4,000 British troops remained in the perimeter, protected by 100,000 French who now manned the defences. The British Army escaped—without its heavy arms and equipment, to be sure, but with the certainty that the men would live to fight another day.

Britain's obvious determination to fight on does not seem to have troubled Hitler's thoughts. He was sure they would see the light after he had finished off France, which he now proceeded to do. The morning after Dunkirk fell, on 5th June, the Germans launched a massive assault on the Somme and soon they were attacking in overwhelming strength along a 400-mile front across France. The French were doomed. Against 143 German divisions, they could

**"I am from now on just the first soldier of the German Reich. I have once more put on that coat that was most sacred and dear to me. I will not take it off again until victory is secured, or I will not survive the outcome"**



deploy only sixty-five, most of them second-rate, for the best units had been expended in Belgium.

In victorious confusion, the German troops surged across France like a tidal wave. On 10th June undefended Paris was occupied. On 16th June, Reynaud resigned and was replaced by Pétain, who next day asked for an armistice.

Hitler replied that he would first have to consult his ally, Mussolini. For this strutting warrior, after making sure that the French armies were hopelessly beaten, had, like a jackal, jumped into the war on 10th June, to try to get in on the spoils.

The Duce's campaign was ludicrous. By 18th June, when Hitler summoned his junior partner to Munich to discuss an armistice with France, some thirty-two Italian divisions, after a week of "fighting," had been unable to budge a scanty French force of six divisions, though the defenders were now threatened by assault in the rear from the Germans sweeping down the Rhône Valley.



## HITLER ON THE MARCH

Mussolini was unable even to get Hitler to agree to joint armistice negotiations with the French. The Fuehrer was not going to share his triumph with this Johnny-come-lately, and the Duce left Munich bitter and frustrated.

AS A NEUTRAL correspondent, I followed the German Army into Paris that June, always the loveliest of months in that majestic capital, and on 19th June heard Hitler was going to lay down his armistice terms on the same spot where Germany had capitulated to France and her allies on 11th November 1918—in a little clearing in the woods at Compiègne. There the Nazi warlord would get his revenge, and the place itself would add to the sweetness of it.

Late on the afternoon of 19th June I drove there and found German army engineers pulling the old railway restaurant car, in which the First World War armistice had been signed, out to the tracks in the centre of the clearing, on the exact spot, they said, where it had stood at 5 a.m. on 11th November 1918.

On the afternoon of 21st June I stood by the edge of the forest at Compiègne to observe the latest and greatest of Hitler's triumphs. It was one of the loveliest summer days I ever remember in France. A warm June sun beat down on the stately trees, casting pleasant shadows on the wooded avenues leading to the little circular clearing. At 3.15 p.m. precisely, Hitler arrived in his big Mercedes.

"I observed his face," I wrote in my diary. "It was grave, solemn, yet brimming with revenge. There was also in it, as in his springy step, a note of the triumphant conqueror, the defier of the world. There was something else, a sort of scornful inner joy at being present at this great reversal of fate."

When he reached the little opening in the forest and his personal standard had been run up, his attention was attracted by a large granite block.

"Hitler, followed by others, walks slowly over to it (I am quoting my diary), steps up, and reads the inscription engraved, in French, in great high letters:

## HITLER ON THE MARCH

"HERE ON THE ELEVENTH OF NOVEMBER 1918 SUCCUMBED THE CRIMINAL PRIDE OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE—VANQUISHED BY THE FREE PEOPLES WHICH IT TRIED TO ENSLAVE.

"Hitler reads it and Goering reads it. I look for the expression on Hitler's face. I have seen that face many times at the great moments of his life. But today! It is afire with scorn, anger, hate, revenge, triumph.

"He steps off the monument and contrives to make even this gesture a masterpiece of contempt. He glances back at it, contemptuous, angry—angry, you almost feel, because he cannot wipe out the awful, provoking lettering with one sweep of his high Prussian boot. He glances slowly round the clearing, and now, as his eyes meet yours, you grasp the depth of his hatred. But there is triumph there, too—revengeful, triumphant hate. Suddenly, as though his face were not giving quite complete expression to his feelings, he throws his whole body into harmony with his mood. He swiftly snaps his hands on to his hips, arches his shoulders, and plants his feet wide apart. It is a magnificent gesture of defiance, of burning contempt for this place now and all that it has stood for in the twenty-two years since it witnessed the humbling of the German Empire."

Hitler and his party then entered the armistice railway carriage, the Fuehrer seating himself in the chair occupied by Foch in 1918. Five minutes later the French delegation arrived, headed by General Charles Huntziger. They looked shattered, but retained a tragic dignity. They had not been told that they would be led to this proud French shrine to undergo such a humiliation, and the shock was no doubt just what Hitler had calculated.

Hitler and his entourage left the railway carriage as soon as General Keitel had read the preamble to the armistice terms. The conditions were hard and merciless, and on the second day of the negotiations the French delegates continued to bicker and delay. Finally, at 6.30 p.m. Keitel issued an ultimatum. The French must accept or reject the German armistice terms within an hour. Within

## HITLER ON THE MARCH

the allotted time the French Government had capitulated. At 6.50 p.m. on 22nd June 1940, Huntziger and Keitel signed the treaty. France was now destined to become a German vassal.

A light rain began to fall as the delegates left the armistice carriage and drove away. Down the road through the woods you could see an unbroken line of refugees making their way home on weary feet, on bicycles, in carts, a few fortunate ones in old lorries. I walked out to the clearing. A gang of German army engineers had already started to move the railway carriage.

"Where to?" I asked.

"To Berlin," they said.

The Franco-Italian armistice was signed in Rome two days later. Mussolini was able to occupy only what his troops had conquered, which meant a few hundred yards of French territory, and to impose a fifty-mile demilitarized zone opposite him in France and Tunisia. The armistice was signed at 7.35 p.m. on 24th June. Six hours later the guns in France lapsed into silence.

France, which had held out unbeaten for four years last time, was out of the war after six weeks. German troops stood guard over most of Europe, from the North Cape above the Arctic Circle to Bordeaux, from the English Channel to the River Bug in eastern Poland. Adolf Hitler had reached the pinnacle. The former Austrian waif, this corporal of the First World War, had become the greatest of German conquerors.

All that stood between him and establishment of German hegemony in Europe under his dictatorship was one indomitable Englishman, Winston Churchill, and the determined people Churchill led, who did not recognize defeat when it stared them in the face and who now stood alone, virtually unarmed, their island home besieged by the mightiest military machine the world had ever seen.

*Condensed from "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich," published by  
Secker and Warburg, London*



**"We shall defend our island home and with the British Empire we shall fight on unconquerable until the curse of Hitler is lifted from the brows of mankind"**



**London: 1940**

## **‘Take Cover!’**

### **An Air Raid Warden Remembers . . .**

*By George Graham*

“WHAT DOES it feel like when a bomb hits you?” was a question to which I invariably replied: “Quite different each time.”

The night of my first experience was dark and overcast. The clouds reflected a dull red glow from fires in the East End of London. The sirens had wailed over an hour before. The streets seemed strangely empty and no friendly footsteps echoed my own as I toured the area that I was responsible for as an air raid warden. Very faintly in the distance could be heard the intermittent *burr-burr* of a high-flying plane.

Then suddenly came a thin whistle accompanied by a rushing sound, rather like the tyres of a heavy lorry on a smooth road. Old Watson, the post warden, had always said: “If you hear a bomb, remember your orders—fall down! If you are not sure, better make a fool of yourself and fall down just the same.” So feeling somewhat sheepish I began gingerly to lower myself to the ground when my rate of progress was accelerated by five violent explosions.

When I opened my eyes the first thing I saw was an orange glow which seemed to come from just round the corner. As I watched, it turned to a deep red, and tongues of flame leaped skyward.

It was just outside my sector, but I ran towards the blaze. Captain Brown, one of the senior wardens, and I arrived simultaneously. “We’ll take charge till one of their fellows arrives,” he

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panted. It was just as well we did, for the Post in whose area the bombs had dropped was itself hit. Their warden never arrived.

Captain Brown was a quiet, unassuming little man, but he quickly took command. “Get the Fire Brigade!” he snapped. “I’ll see to this.” As I turned away I saw him enter the blazing building.

At the fire station two efficient girls took my message and before my cab had time to turn round, a converted taxi with a trailer pump was on its way. Back at the fire Captain Brown had already organized a stirrup-pump team. A thin, effectual stream of water was being directed against the doorway—they were trying to keep the flames from the entrance so that a further rescue attempt could be made. Brown had already brought out a badly injured man and a baby. Billy Evans, another warden, had called an ambulance, so I turned to Captain Brown for instructions. It was hard to recognize him. Eyebrows, eyelashes and most of his hair had vanished, leaving him with a curiously babyish face. His lips were cracked and swollen but they were set in a grin of triumph.

“Traffic,” he croaked at me, which meant that I was to divert vehicles coming that way, and, quite frankly, I was pleased to get away from the blazing house. Stationed at the crossroads I could still hear the hum of aircraft engines. “I wish they would go away,” I kept repeating to myself. “Can’t they find somewhere else!”

BEFORE the intense air raids began, wardens were considered to be pests enforcing the blackout, but later on we were recognized as the most important factor in civil defence. We were the first on the spot after a bomb had dropped and the last to leave. Only on our reports could ambulances, fire engines and rescue squads be sent. We had to know the houses and their occupants; where the gas and water mains were. We were local men trained to save our own homes and our neighbours’. I had been at it for a year then, studying first-aid, fire fighting and gas detection. We were trained to handle one incident at a time, then six incidents simultaneously. Actually we learned to cope with far more. One night, wardens and

householders extinguished sixteen fires in an hour. The training anticipated actual conditions surprisingly. There were more bombs but, thank God, fewer casualties than we had expected.

That first experience shook me considerably. I was just recovering from a severe attack of jaundice. The physical exhaustion and mental depression which accompany the illness made me wonder if I should not resign and let fitter men take my place.

Fortunately, the next two nights were comparatively quiet. My jaundice improved and my spirits with it. I realized that this was no time to give up. On the third night I was in charge of the shelter in Newbold Square. It was a typical municipal shelter, but larger than most, using the basements of two adjoining houses. The windows and walls had been bricked up to a thickness of thirteen-and-a-half inches. Inside, a passage had been knocked through the dividing walls. There were in all six rooms and two long corridors. The ceiling was lined with corrugated steel, propped up by timber beams. There was a supply of drinking water in beer bottles. Sacking hid the temporary lavatory accommodation.

From the first *whee-ooo* of the sirens I knew we should have a bad night. You heard the “banshee howlings” in the distance first, the “whee” rising to a hysterical shriek and the “oo-oo-oo” sinking to a low-pitched gurgle. Then sirens nearer at hand took up the lugubrious song. Eventually the local one burst forth and the air was filled with sounds, as of a thousand souls in torment. It was almost more than nerves could bear.

The sirens were still wailing when anti-aircraft guns joined the unholy symphony. Women and children staggered into the shelter, burdened with blankets and deck chairs, camp beds and mattresses and even cooking utensils. Up to midnight I was kept on the run finding accommodation until I had 136 “clients” safely installed. The guns never ceased but no bombs had yet fallen.

Seeking to relax, I took off my steel helmet, respirator, first-aid haversack, torch and other kit. I had just stretched out in a deck chair when I heard, faintly, the unmistakable swish of falling bombs.



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Then explosions, one—two—three. The whole shelter reared up like a ship in a gale, shook itself, then settled down on an even keel.

“A direct hit!” I thought as I got up from under a heap of plaster and began, quite automatically, to put on my kit. The lights were still burning and all round people were picking themselves up off the floor. Somewhere a child cried, emphasizing the deathly silence in the shelter. Anxious eyes followed me as I went from room to room, but no one spoke or moved. The discipline was amazing and I felt a sense of exultation. “The shelter’s stood it and no one’s hurt!” Trying to give my voice authority, I said: “No one is to leave. I’m going out to see what’s happened.”

A cheery young cockney, in cloth cap and muffler, volunteered to guard the door and as I went out into a thick fog of brick dust I heard the buzz of excited conversation breaking out behind me.

Coughing and spluttering, I staggered over heaps of rubble. My torch failed to spot the caretaker’s lodge which had stood behind the shelter. My God, it had gone! And I nearly fell into a huge crater. Then something cracked above my head and a large coping stone landed at my feet. I flashed my torch at Newbold Mansions, a block of flats on the other side of the street. A corner of it had been chopped away as neatly as with a knife. I knew people must be in the private shelter in its basement.

I started to run towards the Post. As I stumbled along I kept mumbling a sort of prayer. “Please, God, make me do the right thing and make no mistakes.”

At the Post everything was quiet. Captain Brown was writing on a pad. “Express Report!” I spluttered out.

“Just a moment, Mr. Graham,” said Captain Brown. “Please check the location of your incident on the map first.”

This gave me a minute to recover my breath. Then Captain Brown handed a chit to the telephonist and turned to me. “Your report, please,” he snapped.

Drawing myself up to attention I recited: “Casualties trapped—Newbold Mansions and 46 Windsor Road.”

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“Right. Take charge and good luck,” said Captain Brown as I turned away.

There was still no sign of life in Windsor Road when I got back. It would be five minutes before I could expect a rescue party and it was up to me to do what I could. Suddenly a torch flashed. It was the Chief Warden for the district, who lived near by.

Together we started hauling at bricks and stones. A fire some distance away was blazing and now I could see more clearly. Four floors above our heads a large settee was balanced precariously over the edge of a sitting-room floor. I was scared. “Let’s try to get in through the back,” I said.

As we were crawling out of the crater I saw the lights of an approaching car, an ambulance on its way to another incident. I stopped it just as it was about to plunge into the crater. Meanwhile the District Warden had wormed his way into what was left of the house through the back. I heard his voice calling.

When I reached him he was tugging at a door jammed with masonry. Behind it I heard voices, indistinct and thick. A piece of something white was caught in the beam of my torch and, without thinking, I stopped and pulled and found myself holding by the tail the still warm body of a cat. Its head was squashed. I flung the sticky, oozy mess behind me.

At last we got the door open wide enough for us to climb through. We found a man and five women in the passageway, hemmed in by fallen brick. The man had a cut on his cheek, but the women, although covered with dust, appeared only shaken.

“Any missing?” I asked as we helped them through the opening.

“Two old ladies went to the coal cellar,” the man said, pointing to the end of the passage. Just beyond it, I knew, was the crater.

Outside someone was shouting, “Incident Warden!” It was Cameron who had been sent from the Post to act as my messenger. With him was the captain of the rescue party and by the glare of the distant fire I could see his gang unloading their gear from a lorry. I was getting my second wind now and began to feel that our

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system was working efficiently. A smell of gas warned me that a main somewhere was broken or cracked. I sent a second messenger to request a gas repair party. A sudden gush of water in the crater told me a water main had given way, its deluge adding to the rescue squad's difficulties. I sent Cameron to call the water company.

To make things more interesting the Germans had come back. No doubt attracted by the fire up the road, they were buzzing like moths round a lamp. The guns opened up, and I could hear bits of shrapnel hit the street. The unmistakable swish of bombs sent everyone scurrying for shelter. Prone in a doorway I intoned automatically: "Take cover!"

Two explosions were heard not far away. I learned later that Cameron and another warden were just leaving the Post when the blast of the first blew them head over heels back down the steps. Unhurt but cursing Hitler and me impartially, for they were on their way to help me, they picked themselves up and had started to climb the steps again when the blast from the second explosion sent them sprawling once more. Two very ruffled wardens eventually showed up.

Suddenly I heard someone yell, "They've got him!" In the sky, almost directly overhead, was a tent of searchlights. From all directions long white beams were focused and where they intersected was a tiny silver cross—a German bomber, twisting, diving, turning and zooming in a desperate effort to escape. Shells were bursting all round him. We cheered madly. It was like a football match and a particularly close shot would bring roars of "Well played!" "Good shot!" "Have another go, chum!" The whoop of the guns turned into a continuous roar. Then a flash lit up the heavens and the silver cross was there no more. Heartened, we went on with our work.

I was glad that when the two old ladies were dug out I was busy elsewhere and saw only the pathetic little heaps covered with regulation red blankets. They had been killed instantly, which was some consolation.

## ‘TAKE COVER!’

THE PERIOD of warning a bomb gave when falling was usually about five seconds, but it varied. One of the wardens, a portly fellow, found this out. When he heard the swish of a bomb, remembering his instructions, he flung himself to the ground, stopping his ears and opening his mouth. Then he counted five slowly. Nothing happened, so he unstopped his ears. The “swish” was still there. Again stopping his ears, he counted a further deliberate five. When again nothing happened he decided that the whole game was a fraud or a trick of his imagination and got ponderously to his feet only to be blown over by the explosion.

The chaps at our Post were a mixed lot. Among the wardens there were two solicitors, a gardener, a porter from a block of flats, a professional singer, a company director and a bookmaker’s clerk. Watson, the post warden, was a retired businessman who did not believe in too much spit and polish and saluting. But in spite of his apparent slackness the discipline and morale were excellent. The two senior wardens were Captain Brown and Mr. Stowen, a retired ship’s engineer, a rough diamond whose lurid tales of experiences in far seas would send girl telephonists rushing, scarlet-faced, from the room.

The most unpleasant task was detecting unexploded bombs in the night; the grimmest was fighting oil incendiary bombs.

We would receive a message that a time bomb was suspected in a certain area. Would we locate it, please? These missiles are generally safe for fifteen minutes, but they leave little or no crater. One night we searched for over an hour before we found a bomb in a little side street. It had fallen through a gutter grating, leaving practically no trace. Soon after we had evacuated all the inhabitants, the whole row of workmen’s dwellings was wrecked by the explosion.

The oil bomb was a large sphere filled with crude oil, a horrible, murderous thing which made a queer gobbling noise as it fell. The core consisted of high explosive which ignited the oil and blew it out in all directions, coating buildings and people with flame.

Billy Evans and I were on patrol when one of these fell not far

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away. We ran as fast as we could, but the house was blazing when we got there. A man was staggering in the street, flames licking upward from his blazing clothes. A thin continuous shriek was coming from the house; I shall always hear that helpless, hopeless voice ringing in my ears. We rolled the man in the gutter to smother the flames, but he was quite unrecognizable when the ambulance took him away. A girl we got out of the house, with the help of other wardens, had most of her skin burnt off. She survived by some miracle and I heard a fortnight later that she was still in a hospital, babbling in her delirium: “Why did you do it? Why did you do it?” Why, indeed.

FRIDAY the 13th is always unlucky for me. My duty on 12th September finished at 8 p.m. and I was to go on again at midnight. About nine I was sitting in our landlady’s basement, listening to the distant roar of guns, the radio and the chatter of other residents. They combined into a sort of lullaby and I dozed. The whistle of a bomb woke me up. The house shook but there was no explosion. A time bomb? I felt resentful and scared. I did not want to search for it for I needed rest, but I could not leave it there to explode. I telephoned to the Post for help, and two wardens arrived at the double. By the time the bomb was located, it was nearly midnight and I had to report at the Post. Shrapnel was falling all round.

In the pitch dark the flashes of guns and the bursting of shells helped to illumine the way. I reached the Post just as midnight ushered in Friday the 13th. Everyone was cheerful there. Tea was being brewed. Wardens going off duty were glad to hand their responsibilities over to us. A telephonist was sweeping out the rooms and Hilda, the Post cat, was lapping milk.

When the patrols were being allocated, Captain Brown left me at the Post as stand-by. “You’re looking seedy, Graham,” he said. “Mustn’t have that jaundice starting again, you know. Better stay here for a bit.” Thankfully I settled down for a couple of hours.

‘TAKE COVER!’

Two reliefs had been sent out and it was my turn next. I was donning equipment when the guns opened up with a terrific barrage. Then we heard the whine of bombs. One—*that was near*, flashed through my mind. Two—*that’s nearer!* Three—*he’s heading for us!* I threw myself on the floor as, with a tremendous rush and whoop, something crashed through the room.

In times of crisis the strangest things stick in one’s memory. As the outer wall collapsed—very slowly, it seemed to me—and the room filled with smoke and brick dust, I saw a great round hump in front of me. It was the night watchman’s behind. He had thrown himself into the attitude of an Arab praying to Allah. As the hump slowly subsided and bricks and rubble clattered round me I remember saying, “Christ, Christ, Christ,” in a sort of quiet monotone.

Anderson and Cameron came rushing in. From the street they had seen the bomb hit the Post. Neither they nor I could account for the fact that we were still alive. I started up the stairs to investigate the damage. Anderson followed.

The flat above the Post had been wrecked. We could not see the extent of other damage for the clouds of brick dust. I stumbled over something in the rubbish. “Andy, shine a light here a minute,” I called. “What’s this thing?”

“It’s a boiler,” said Anderson.

“No, a sewer pipe,” I answered. Then the truth dawned on us. “It’s the bomb!” we yelled in unison.

I began giving orders but could not tear my eyes away from that gleaming cylinder, lying like a polished monster among the debris. “Start evacuating your flats. Get everyone out. I’ll clear the Post.”

Captain Brown received the news calmly. “I suppose it’s a fifty-pounder,” he said, lighting his pipe. “Lucky it didn’t explode or you chaps in the recreation room would have all gone to glory.”

“So would you, sir,” I replied. “It’s a 500-pounder at least.”

The pipe dropped from his hand. But as he stooped to retrieve it, I saw the gleam in his eye again. The old war horse was smelling powder. “Evacuate what you consider necessary,” he said. “Then

‘TAKE COVER!’

take the telephonists to Post 22. We shall carry on from there.”

The old night watchman in the recreation room was dead, a brick having crushed his skull. The living required our attention. The residents of the flat next door were gathered in a miserable little group in the doorway. At their head stood an old gentleman of about ninety, clad in a dressing-gown and supporting himself with a stick. He wanted to know what all the fuss was about. Without argument Anderson and I picked him up and we started off at a trot towards the nearest basement-shelter. Later I discovered that we had taken the old gentleman, and all the residents, within two feet of a crater made by yet another time bomb which no one had heard drop. When I returned to the Post, Captain Brown and the telephonists were still there, sending and receiving messages with that unexploded bomb just outside the entrance. The telephonists and I started out for Post 22 but Captain Brown remained for another two hours, methodically collecting important papers. The bomb finally did go off, but not until ten in the morning.

The ladies looked relieved as we left, but soon a barrage was going all out round us, and jagged bits of shrapnel dropping from the sky were as dangerous as bombs. We ran to a public shelter. A senior warden there refused to let the telephonists proceed.

I went on, but I must have spent most of the time on the ground covering that quarter-mile to our new headquarters. A fire was burning not far away and German planes were circling round and round. As I dived to the gutter for the tenth time and heard the distant explosion, I felt thankful that the darkness hid my antics.

It was past 3 a.m. when I reached Post 22. A table, a telephone and a welcoming cup of tea were ready for me. Half an hour later Captain Brown arrived with the Post records under his arm. He looked tired and pale but in very good spirits.

I was on my way to get him some tea when that ominous *whoosh* sent me diving under a table. My nerves were on edge. The others looked at me in surprise—but not for long. The concussion shook the building and once more brickwork and glass clattered round me.

‘TAKE COVER!’

People were picking themselves up off the floor when I crawled out. Someone was scrabbling about outside the door but apart from that there was very little sound. Then Mr. Henderson, senior warden at Post 22, strode in, his face strangely contorted behind its mask of sweat and dust. “Time bomb!” he blurted. “Everybody out!”

Twice in one night!

The guns had stopped and it was raining heavily. No fires were visible and a tinge of greyness in the east told that dawn was near. It was decided to go to Post 23 but when I telephoned them the reply was: “We’re completely surrounded by fires. Glad to have you but you’re probably better off where you are.” That’s what *they* thought.

Records to be gathered up once more, people from neighbouring houses to be evacuated. A strong smell of chlorine gas caused us to put on our respirators and as we evacuated houses we told the inhabitants to don their gas masks too as they came out. Since there had been no gas alarm, it was a shock to them to hear knocking on the door and find wardens in gas masks gibbering about unexploded bombs and the necessity to evacuate immediately, but most of them took it calmly. The little procession streaming down the grey, wet street, wearing gas masks and clutching precious belongings, hurriedly assembled, would have seemed funny had it not been so pathetic.

Eventually we found the source of the gas. A direct hit on a borough depot had blown some chlorine cylinders into the streets, some as far as a quarter of a mile away. The chlorine was used to disinfect water in the council swimming baths and there was not enough of it to do any harm.

Post 23 was surrounded by smoking and charred ruins. I looked round for our wardens but could see none. Surely out of nineteen who had come on duty that night I could not be the only one left. But this turned out to be a fact. Exhausted, they had one by one dropped out of the fray, taking rest and refuge in the nearest house. Captain Brown was the only one to arrive.



### ‘TAKE COVER!’

The place was crowded. People from bombed and burnt houses were clamouring for refreshment and information. “What shall we do?” “Where shall we go?” “Can I have a drink of something?”

Then another message. Two more time bombs were suspected in our sector. Captain Brown would not let me go out again. Soaked to the skin, he went off to investigate.

Left alone in that surging crowd I counted the minutes until the morning shift would come on duty. Motor coaches began to arrive to take the people to rest centres where they would be fed and clothed, and I was busily occupied in getting them away.

Many pets had to be left behind to be destroyed. It seemed to my highly strung temper then that women were making unnecessary fuss in parting with their dogs and cats. Later I realized how much these animals meant in a desolate household.

Time went by and still none of the relief shift arrived. The air raid warning sounded again and I nearly wept with impotent rage. How could I single-handed report bombs and damage, render first-aid, evacuate houses, rope off streets and do all the other necessary jobs? My jaundiced liver was making its presence felt and my lungs were nearly bursting with the effort to breathe. I had not had my shoes off for twenty-four hours and I was soaked.

But fortunately nothing dropped round us. The inspiring fortitude of the people and their gratitude when we could give them a little help made me ashamed of my grouching. At 10.30 a warden came to relieve me. He told me that all the shelters had been manned, and that although the time bomb at our Post had gone off and destroyed the building no more people had been killed. I began to feel cheerful again. But that Friday the 13th did me in and I had to retire, temporarily, from the battle of London.

Habit is a difficult thing to break.

For years I still prepared to dive into the ditch every time I heard a swish behind me. Fortunately it has always turned out to be the screeching tyres of a peaceful car.

## **The Enemy's Masterpiece of Espionage**

*By J. Edgar Hoover*

*Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation*

ONE MORNING early in January 1940, a traveller stood at the rails of a ship as it entered New York Harbour. The pilot had just come aboard with the usual officials. No one else was near as one of the boarding party whispered to the man at the rails:

"You are to be S. T. Jenkins. As soon as we land, go to the Belvoir Hotel. Wait in your room!"

That evening, after hours of waiting, Jenkins heard a key turn in a lock; the door to the next suite quietly opened and two special agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation marched in. Jenkins, who was on the FBI staff, shook hands with the agents and plunged into a disturbing report:

"I have been a student at the Nazi Espionage School, Klopstock Pension, Hamburg. My class graduated two weeks ago. In a farewell speech, the principal, Dr. Hugo Sebold, said:

"The greatest problem of *der Führer's* agents abroad is keeping in touch with us. The enemy has given us a great deal of trouble. But before long we shall be communicating back and forth throughout the world with impunity. I cannot explain the method now but watch out for the dots—*lots and lots of little dots!*"

"I have been sent to America with my orders—and was told nothing more," our secret agent said.

Until this time, the FBI had kept German and Japanese espionage in the United States under control by constantly uncovering

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every new enemy communication technique. Counter-espionage experts had identified their couriers, traced their accommodation addresses, broken their codes, solved their secret inks and tracked down their hidden radio transmitters.

Once a box of matches found in a spy's pocket was closely scrutinized. Four of the matches, looking just like the others, were actually little pencils that wrote invisibly, the writing being developed later by a solution made from a rare drug. This story-book contraption was exposed, as well as micro-film letters rolled round spools and covered with silk thread, stitched into the spines of magazines; one film was tucked inside a fountain-pen barrel which had to be broken to extract the note.

When eight saboteurs landed on the Atlantic Coast, they carried handkerchiefs on which the High Command had written in ghost ink the names of Nazi sympathizers in the United States. From the rubber heel of one agent we removed a photographic image of a blueprint for a submarine escape device.

All these devices, and more, had been detected—but what was this matter of the “dots, dots, dots”?

At the FBI, our first move was to call in from our laboratories a young physicist who had done extraordinary work in colour microphotography. He was told to undertake certain experiments, based on guesses in our office about the meaning of Sebold's boast. Meanwhile, every agent was looking feverishly for some tell-tale evidence of the as yet undetected dots.

One day in August 1941, we met a youngish traveller from the Balkans on his arrival in the United States. We knew he was the playboy son of a millionaire. There was reason to believe that he was a German agent. With meticulous care, we examined his possessions, from toothbrush to shoes, his clothes, and his papers. While a laboratory agent was holding an envelope so that the light slanted obliquely across its surface, he saw a sudden tiny gleam. A dot had reflected the light. A dot—a punctuation point on the front of the envelope; a black particle no bigger than a fly speck.

The agent carefully touched the point of a needle under the rim of the black circle and prised the thing loose. It was a bit of alien matter that had been driven into the fibre of the paper, where it looked like a typewritten full stop. Under the microscope it was magnified 200 times. And then we could see that it was an image on a film of a full-sized typewritten letter; a spy letter with blood-chilling text:

*There is reason to believe that the scientific works for the utilization of atomic-kernel energy are being driven forward into a certain direction in the United States partly by use of helium. Continuous information about the tests made on this subject are required and particularly:*

1. *What process is practised in the United States for transporting heavy uranium?*

2. *Where are being made tests with uranium? (Universities, industrial laboratories, etc.)*

3. *Which other raw materials are being used in these tests? Entrust only best experts with this.*

Now we had it! The German espionage service had found a way to photograph a full-sized letter down to the size of a midge. Actually, that was what we had suspected. Our scientists had succeeded in making some very small images of our own; their handicap lay not in the theory but in lacking the emulsion the Germans had perfected.

It was incredibly ingenious and effective, this micro-dot gadget. It perfectly counterfeited a typewritten or printed dot. The young Balkan agent, for example, had four telegraph forms in his pocket, carrying Lilliputian spy orders that looked like full stops; eleven micro-dots on the four papers. Pasted under a postage stamp we found one tiny strip of the film that carried the images of twenty-five full-sized typewritten sheets.

We now knew that the Balkan playboy had orders to investigate not only the atomic energy project but also to report on monthly production of planes, how many were delivered to Britain, Canada, Australia, and how many American pilots were being trained.

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Under questioning, he was bland, affable, and, seeing that we knew about the dots, he began to gush information.

He had studied under the famous Professor Zapp, inventor of the micro-dot process, at the Technical High School in Dresden. Espionage messages were first typed on square sheets of paper and then photographed with a high-precision miniature camera. This first reduction was to about the size of a postage stamp. Again it was photographed, this time through a reversed microscope, the infinitesimally small image being retained and developed on a glass slab heavily coated with the secret emulsion. The developed negative was then painted over with collodion, so that the emulsion could be slipped bodily off the glass. The technician then used a curious adaptation of the hypodermic needle, the point of which was clipped off and the round edge sharpened. This was placed over the micro-dot as a baker's cutting cup pinches out a piece of pastry—and the micro-dot lifted out.

Next, at a point on the letter where the dot was to be placed, the paper was scratched very slightly with a needle. The syringe plunger pressed the dot into the texture. Another very small needle scratched the fibre back over the dot and finally it received a dab of collodion to tie down the fibres of the paper.

Later, Zapp immensely simplified his process. In a cabinet the size of a dispatch case, most of these operations were performed mechanically. Eventually the machines were turned out in quantity and shipped to agents in South America. Periodic consignments of the emulsion were also dispatched at intervals. To read the missives, Nazi agents in South America carried with them an ingenious collapsible microscope.

We were able to spot and intercept hundreds of micro-dot messages written in South America. Through the constant scrutiny of micro-dots we got a daily insight into the doings of various gangs. They were viciously active, acquiring information on ship movements through the Panama Canal, the deficient condition of one of the canal locks, the extent of destruction of US oil stores in the



## Recado Telefonico

Itmo. Snr

Ap. 408

Hora 11-45

Data 29.11.94

ASSUMTO:

pede para o sr da  
telefonar, hotel luscar

270045

O Empregado:

Seu Hella

C.N.P. 133-500 B

Magnified 200 times,  
a dot on a hotel  
message form  
revealed typed  
instructions to a  
German spy

1) Hier vorliegende Sonderauftraege:

- Es soll in USA ein Kartuschenpulver hergestellt werden, das praktisch Rauchlos und Muendungsfeuerschwach ist. Mehrere Einzelheiten erwuensent: Farbe des Muendungsfeuers. Farbe des Rauches. Wenn moeglich Zusammensetzung des Pulvers.
- Beobachtung des Kleinschiffbaues, Destroyers, Torpedo- Motor- boats, corvettes, submarines.
- Produktion von Geschuetzen (Kanonen) aller Art. (Konstruktion?)
- Produktion von Schnellfeuerkanonen fuer Flugzeuge und Tanks, sowie anti-tank and anti-air guns. (Konstruktion?)
- Deckadressen in Rio: R.W. Brinkmann, Rio, Caixa postal 100.--- Tarntext in english, ueber

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attack on Pearl Harbour. Urgent demands came from Berlin for more and more. On one spy we found a seemingly innocent telephone message on a crumpled memo form from a hotel switchboard. But the printing of that form contained two full stops which when enlarged contained several messages, including the following:

*Here are special orders.*

*It is reported that a cartridge powder is being manufactured in the USA which is practically smokeless and has a weak muzzle fire. More details desired: Colour of the muzzle fire, colour of the smoke. If possible, the composition of the powder.*

The Japanese, too, were playing the dot game. On 12th February 1942, micro-dot message number ninety of a series being watched, embedded in the envelope of a letter posted to an address in Brazil, relayed a message from Tokyo to a Japanese naval attaché in South America as follows:

*If communication with Q. is impossible send I. or representative to Argentina to establish communications with the naval attaché there.*

Q. was a notorious Japanese naval spy.

Often messages were trumped up by the agents to fool their superiors into thinking they had extraordinary inside sources of information. Spies constantly used items from the Press; in two weeks of 1943 they sent nearly 100 messages lifted from two news magazines. But Germans in Portugal also paid neutral sailors for copies of American magazines—300 escudos, then about £4, for a single magazine containing military information. So the cat was soon out of the bag and a plaintive message came through to all German agents:

*We want what is not printed in the news.*

Many spies were arrested, many gang nests cleaned out because we had the secret of the micro-dot. One day a message mentioned casually the name of a woman resident of Madrid. A search of our voluminous cross-file revealed that some years previously she had cabled money to a man in America. We found that this young man was idling in Washington, and that he had once been very attentive

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to an American girl. Later she had joined the services and was now on the Pacific Coast. As always, the Army co-operated; the girl was ordered to Washington and fifteen minutes after her arrival she was in the FBI office.

How well did she know this man? Once he had been very attentive to her but his brooding and secretive manner had repelled her; finally she dropped all correspondence with him. We put the problem to her frankly: what we needed was a pipe-line into his innermost thoughts. Would she be willing to try to discover if he were an enemy?

It was contrived that she would run into her admirer accidentally on the street. Taken in by the ruse, he was delighted to see her again and for the next month the girl played Delilah magnificently. The spy was soon put behind bars because he blabbed to her of his espionage work, believing in his vanity that she loved him enough to be his accomplice.

The most important case broken through the micro-dot was in a South American country, where we were finding letters written by all sorts of people—every one loaded with micro-dots for Berlin. Love letters, family missives, business communications, all seemed harmless, but their embedded micro-dot messages had to do with the blowing up of seized Axis ships in southern harbours and with details of war production. The letters were in different handwritings, or typed on various typewriters, but the micro-dots they secretly carried were all produced by the same machine, the signatures in the same handwriting. Hence all were prepared by a single organization. The day came when in one city after another in South America, from shop and office and home, South American authorities aided by our agents were able to seize a great interlocking ring of Nazi agents—all enemies of the Allied cause.

These are but samples of the plans we thwarted because we got that tip on the micro-dot from an agent planted right under Dr. Sebold's nose.



## **The Cruise of the Raider Atlantis**

*By Robert Littell*

WHEN the look-out of the British liner *City of Exeter* reported a strange mast on the South Atlantic horizon, the captain was suspicious. It was May 1940, and Nazi Germany was on the march. But half an hour later, with relief, the skipper put the approaching stranger down as the 8,400-ton *Kashii Maru*, Japanese, and therefore neutral.

On her deck a woman was pushing a pram. Near by lolled several of the crew—dark little men whose shirt-tails fluttered in the breeze, after the fashion of Japanese seamen. The two ships passed without pause or signal.

Actually, the pram was empty, the “woman” was not a woman at all. The deck hands had names like Fritz, Klaus and Karl. The rest of the crew of 350 technicians and fighting men were hidden below. The ship herself, behind a camouflage of plywood ventilators, canvas funnels and paint, was the German raider *Atlantis*, one of the deadliest birds of prey ever let loose on the seven seas.

The Germans armed nine such raiders during the war. Together they sank 136 ships. But the *Atlantis* had the biggest haul, the longest voyage and the most remarkable commander.

She had begun life as the *Goldenfels*, a 7,800-ton express cargo ship of the German Hansa Line. When war broke out she was fitted with six concealed six-inch guns, many smaller guns, torpedo tubes, a scout seaplane and a cargo of mines. She carried also

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enough disguise props to impersonate any of a dozen innocent-looking merchantmen.

In March 1940, commanded by Bernhard Rogge, a big-featured, imposing officer of forty, the *Atlantis* sneaked up the Norwegian coast dressed as a Soviet steamer and broke free into the North Atlantic. Her orders: to strike with all possible surprise at ships rounding the Cape of Good Hope.

After crossing the Equator on April 25 the *Atlantis* lowered her Soviet flag and with a flick of her counterfeit funnel became the "Japanese" motorship met by the *City of Exeter*—which Captain Rogge refrained from attacking because of the large number of passengers aboard.

First victim of the *Atlantis* was the British ship *Scientist*. The order to heave-to and not use her wireless came as a complete surprise to the *Scientist*. But her wireless officer had the presence of mind to send out a frantic "QQQ"—meaning "Armed enemy merchantman wants to stop me." The *Atlantis* opened fire, hitting the *Scientist* amidships and destroying her wireless. The seventy-seven members of the stricken ship's company took to the boats, two of them fatally wounded. All were taken aboard the *Atlantis* as prisoners, and the *Scientist* was torpedoed. The *Atlantis* sped round the Cape.

Two weeks later Captain Rogge intercepted a British warning that a German auxiliary cruiser, disguised as a Japanese ship, might be roaming the Indian Ocean. Immediately the *Atlantis* took off her kimono and became the Netherlands motorship *Abbekerk*.

The second victim was the Norwegian motorship *Tirranna*, with supplies for Australian troops in Palestine. Rogge sent a prize crew aboard, and made her trail along for some weeks as a prison ship.

One month later, three victims turned up in rapid succession. And then in the next month, five more. Messages found in the waste-paper baskets of one vessel made it possible for the Germans to break the British merchant naval code.

By now the Admiralty had ordered all ships to report suspicious

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vessels by radio, regardless of consequences. As a result, the *Atlantis* had orders to shoot on sight and ask questions afterwards.

About half the raider's victims managed to send a message before they were subdued. Most of them were shelled, sometimes with heavy casualties. But Captain Rogge's solitary maritime war was as nearly "civilized" as war can be. He had room for prisoners and took aboard all that he could rescue. In twenty months at sea he sheltered—at one time or another—more than 1,000 prisoners, of all ages and nationalities, and of both sexes. He gave them the same rations as the ship's company. They were allowed on deck in the daytime unless the *Atlantis's* crew were at battle stations. They swam in the canvas swimming pool.

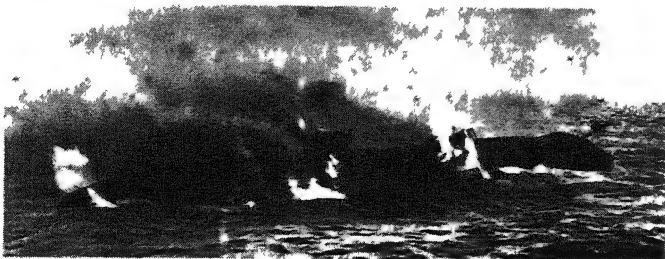
Captured captains had quarters to themselves. Norwegian and British officers organized a club, where Germans were frequent guests. They would talk, says one of them, about "home, the sea and beautiful women." Politics were banned. When prisoners were transferred to other ships Captain Rogge gave farewell parties for the skippers.

Through the autumn of 1940 it was fisherman's luck for the *Atlantis*: only one ship in forty days. Then suddenly, in mid-November, three ships within forty-eight hours. The Norwegian *Ole Jacob*, bursting with high-octane petrol, was seized without resistance when two officers in the *Atlantis's* motor-boat masqueraded as British officers. The Norwegian tanker *Teddy* burnt for hours, a sky-high torch visible to every ship in the area. And the *Automedon*, whose papers included a top-secret War Cabinet report and the mail for the British Far-Eastern High Command, surrendered when a shell killed everyone on her bridge.

Captain Rogge had a genius for managing men. Everyone got exactly the same share of the small luxuries—beer, sweets, food parcels—found on captured ships. As a substitute for shore leave he gave a week's leave on board ship. Twelve holiday-makers at a time took over the isolation ward. Unless there was a call to battle stations, they were free to do as they pleased, whether it was sleeping,



With the *Atlantis* in the background, men of her crew take on supplies of fresh water from an island in the South Pacific



Below: Three victims of the *Atlantis*

*King City*



*Kemmendine*



*City of Baghdad*

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mending clothes, writing poetry or playing the guitar. This official loafing in the midst of other men's hard work had a wonderfully relaxing effect.

The year 1941 began badly for the *Atlantis*—only four ships in as many months. One of them was the Egyptian liner *Zam Zam*, with 140 American missionaries on board. The *Zam Zam's* passengers and crew, 309 people, were all safely transferred to the *Atlantis*. Next day another German ship, the *Dresden*, relieved the *Atlantis* of all these captives, and eventually brought them to Bordeaux.

The terror the raider spread probably hurt the Allies as much as the sinkings. British warships, badly needed elsewhere, had to be sent south to hunt for her. Merchantmen had to zigzag on lengthened routes, wasting time and fuel. Crews were harder to find and had to be paid danger-zone allowances. Official mail was delayed or lost.

Through most of the summer the *Atlantis* criss-crossed the southern Indian Ocean without meeting anything larger than a sea gull. Then on 10th September, 1941, she captured her 22nd—and last—victim, the Norwegian *Silvaplana*.

On 21st November, while touching down after an early-morning flight, the *Atlantis's* scout plane was disabled—just when its eyes were needed most. For next day U-boat 126 was to meet the raider to take on fuel—a delicate operation during which the *Atlantis* would be defenceless. At a rendezvous midway between Brazil and Africa the two ships met, and by breakfast time fuel oil was being pumped between them. In the motor launch alongside the submarine were several members of the *Atlantis's* crew; the submarine's captain was on board the *Atlantis*. At the same time the raider's port engine was dismantled for repairs.

Suddenly the look-out, scanning a sunlit sea, caught sight of the pencil point of a mast. Minutes later the British heavy cruiser *Devonshire*, Captain R. D. Oliver (later Vice-Admiral Oliver, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.C.) commanding, was bearing down on the two Germans.

## THE CRUISE OF THE RAIDER ATLANTIS

At first glimpse of the *Devonshire* the Germans' securing lines were cast off and the U-boat dived, stranding its captain on board the raider. Had the U-boat been seen? From the disconnected fuel hose a tell-tale patch of iridescent oil spread upon the water.

There was only one hope for the *Atlantis*: bluff, talk and gain time, so as to lure the *Devonshire* within range of the U-boat's torpedo tubes.

Captain Oliver was highly suspicious. Except for such parts as ventilators, the ship he had found spreading oil on a calm sea fitted the Admiralty's description of the mysterious raider. He therefore steamed to and fro, well out of torpedo range, and bracketed the *Atlantis* with two salvoes.

This was the kind of question a sensible ship had to answer. Captain Rogge radioed that he was the vessel *Polyphemus*. Captain Oliver signalled a query to the Commander-in-Chief, South Atlantic, asking if this stranger could be the genuine *Polyphemus*.

For almost an hour the *Atlantis*, hove-to and gently rolling in the swell, dragged out the conversation. There was still a faint chance that the U-126 might get close enough to the British cruiser to fire a torpedo. But the submarine's senior officer stayed near the *Atlantis* instead of going for the cruiser.

At 9.34 Captain Oliver got his answer from the South Atlantic Commander-in-Chief: "No—repeat—No!" A minute later the *Devonshire* opened fire. When the third salvo of eight-inch shells crashed down upon the *Atlantis*, Captain Rogge gave orders to set time charges and abandon ship.

Just before 10 a.m. the forward magazine blew up. A few minutes later the *Atlantis* sank by the stern. As she went down, the men whose home she had been for twenty months cheered her, and Captain Rogge, with his little Scotch terrier Ferry beside him, stood up in one of the boats and saluted.

Because Captain Oliver, in the words of the Admiralty's report, could not have stopped to pick up survivors "without running grave risk of being torpedoed," the *Devonshire* soon disappeared.

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By whistle and by voice the *Atlantis's* crew were called together. Only seven had been killed by the shelling. At least 100 were swimming about or clinging to wreckage. The submarine took on board the wounded and the irreplaceable specialists. Six lifeboats packed in 200 more. Fifty-two men, provided with lifebelts and blankets, had to huddle on the submarine's deck. In case of a dive they were to swim to a lifeboat. The nearest land was Brazil, 950 miles away.

The strange flotilla—six lifeboats towed by a submarine—got under way on the afternoon of the sinking. Twice a day a rubber dinghy put out from the submarine to make the tour of the boats with a hot meal.

Three days after the sinking the U-126 was met by the German submarine supply ship *Python*, and the survivors were picked up—only to be cast upon the waters again. For the *Python* was intercepted and sunk by another British cruiser, the *Dorsetshire*, famous for having given the *Bismarck* her *coup de grâce* a few months earlier.

Eventually, in German and Italian submarines, the *Atlantis's* crew members reached St. Nazaire, and made their way to Berlin, arriving just after New Year's Day, 1942.

Captain Rogge was promoted to Rear-Admiral, and put in charge of training naval cadets. But his anti-Nazi feelings were discovered, and he was later relegated to an unimportant post.

After the war, not a few of the *Atlantis's* victims expressed kindly feelings towards Rogge. Captain White of the *City of Baghdad* wrote his thanks for the treatment he had received as a prisoner; Captain Woodcock of the *Tottenham* invited Admiral Rogge to come aboard when his ship docked in Hamburg where Rogge was living after the war. During the lean years following the collapse of Nazi Germany, former prisoners sent their ex-captor many food parcels.

As an ex-member of Rogge's crew said, "If Rogge called me I would follow him like a shot—no matter what navy it was."

## **The Siege of Fort Eben Emael**

*By Lieutenant-Colonel Paul W. Thompson*

THE FORTRESS of Eben Emael, keystone of the Belgian defence line, was considered by military experts to be impregnable to direct assault. It might be besieged and at long last starved out; but taken by storm—never. Yet less than thirty-six hours after the German Army had crossed the Belgian border its 1,400 officers and men filed out of the fortress and surrendered.

Immediately an incredulous world clamoured for an explanation. Fanciful accounts of a new gas which had paralysed the garrison appeared in print. The air was full of conjecture, and the list of Hitler's "secret weapons" received some choice additions. Military men, however, whose business it is to leave no mystery of war unsolved, continued to study the case. And at length they got at the truth.

The fortress occupied a commanding position on a plateau near the River Meuse and the Albert Canal, controlling the approaches to both. Ultra-modern in design, it was flanked by a score of lesser forts scattered over an area about one mile square. These individual works were of steel, armour-plate and reinforced concrete, deeply embedded in native rock and connected by a system of deep tunnels. Each work had large-calibre guns for blasting the distant approaches, and machine-guns for close-in defence. Each one, and the fortress as a whole, was protected by dense barbed wire entanglements and belts of mines. Belgium justifiably felt secure behind the fortifications anchored on "impregnable" Eben Emael.



But the Germans had been working ceaselessly on the perfection of a new kind of heavily armed assault troops, the *Stürmbataillonen Bohm*, developed towards the end of the First World War. They were familiar with the details of Eben Emael; and very likely their experiments were made on a full-scale replica.

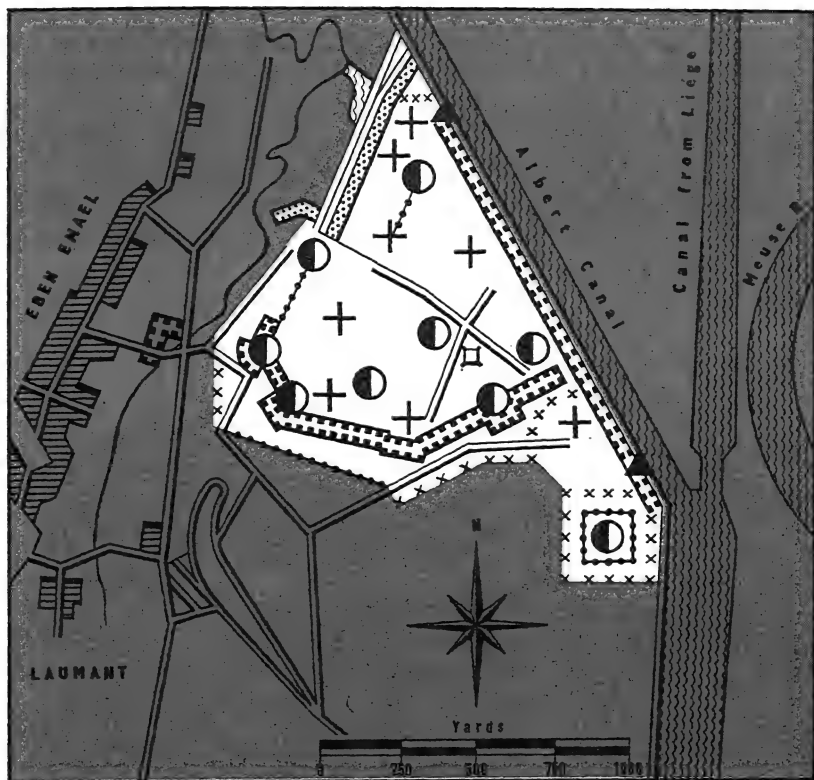
At dawn on 10th May 1940 the German juggernaut pushed across the defenceless borders of the Low Countries. Columns of tanks moved through the winding roads of Luxembourg towards Sedan in northern France. Paratroops dropped on Rotterdam. Infantry choked the roads. Aircraft filled the skies. Everywhere there was action, everywhere power.

Into this vast scene there moved a certain motorized battalion. A pinpoint lost in the great mass, it had the right of way on all roads leading towards the crossings of the Meuse and the Albert Canal at Maastricht on the Dutch-Belgian border—the back door to Eben Emael. It was a battalion of German engineers—*demolition engineers*. And it was peculiarly reinforced—by a company of infantry, a battery of anti-tank guns, a battery of small-calibre anti-aircraft guns, and a detachment of troops trained in chemical warfare.

This strange outfit was, in effect, a small fighting team. First, the demolition engineer—able to handle the deadly TNT. Second, the infantry component—ready to move in, to occupy, and to hold. Third, the anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns—tremendous accuracy and penetrating power. Lastly, the chemical-warfare unit—experts in making smoke and flame.

By nightfall of 10th May the demolition battalion had reached the base of the plateau, at the top of which lay Fort Eben Emael. Meanwhile dive-bombers had been attacking the fortress since dawn. At noon a flight of transport planes disgorged perhaps fifty paratroops who took refuge in shell holes and established radio communication with the battalion.

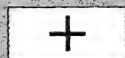
That evening the Belgians were shaken but by no means desperate. The works had been designed to withstand just such punishment, and they were essentially undamaged. The net result of the



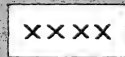
Plan of Fort Eben Emael



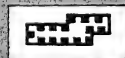
Work with armoured turret



Work without  
armoured turret



Wire obstacle



Tank obstacle (ditch)



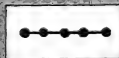
Tank obstacle  
(water filled ditch)



Pill box, small emplacement



Water tower



Strong fence

bombardment had been to blast some of the obstacles, to explode many of the mines, and to pock the terrain with shell holes.

At dawn on 11th May the German engineers began working their way up the slopes. The operation was difficult and the Belgian guns made it hazardous. But for one vital item the attackers would have been swept from the plateau as rapidly as they reached it: that was the bombardment of the morning before—which, while not damaging the works, had left the fields a mass of shell holes. Into these shelters the attackers dived.

Now began the climactic phase of the entire operation: the assault. The immediate objective was to get the engineers up to certain selected works. To protect their advance, flat-firing anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns delivered point-blank fire against the embrasures, trying to put out Eben Emael's "eyes." The chemical-warfare troops blinded adjacent supporting works with smoke. The infantry covered the embrasures with small arms fire and stood ready to consolidate any success the engineers might gain.

There is no minimizing the hazards involved; the losses among the engineers, as they bounded and crawled from one hole to the next, were heavy. These men resembled walking arsenals. Hand grenades were sticking out of the tops of boots and from between the buttons of blouses. Round almost every neck was slung a canvas sack bulging with seven-pound blocks of TNT. Each soldier carried a rifle or a sub-machine-gun. Many pushed or pulled fifteen-foot lengths of narrow board to which were tied, end-to-end, other blocks of TNT. Others carried twenty-foot "charge-placing poles" which looked like elongated bricklayers' hods. Still others lugged flame-throwers. It was a strange and grotesque assembly, but one in which every last detail was the result of innumerable trials.

The boards loaded with TNT were used, as in the First World War, to blast a way through the barbed wire. Each one blew a path perhaps twenty feet wide, and also destroyed near-by mines.

Guns on both sides were fired as fast as men could load them. Occasionally there was a crash louder than normal—indicating

## THE SIEGE OF FORT EBEN EMAEL

that one of the engineers and his bagful of TNT had gone up. But the advance continued. And finally the surviving engineers reached the works. Here they were comparatively safe. For a fortification can deliver deadly fire on areas far to the front, sides and rear; but there is a small area immediately adjacent to it which the guns cannot be depressed to reach.

Now began the action to which all that had gone before was simple preparation. The flame-throwers opened up against the embrasures. The engineers fused up their blocks of TNT and from their points of vantage began systematically to demolish the works by detonating the TNT against sensitive parts: embrasures, ports, turrets, joints and doors. Where possible, they placed the charge by hand, set off a delay fuse, and took cover round a corner or in a shell hole. In other cases the charges were given a shorter delay fuse and tossed into embrasures like hand grenades; or they were put in the hod end of a charge-placing pole and pushed into place.

The action which now took place defies description. The flame-throwers belched flame, the German anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns continued to fire, the Belgian guns answered. Smoke and flame and crashing detonations—it is doubtful if the history of warfare had ever seen the like. The TNT began to make itself felt. Here an embrasure went out of action, there a turret was jammed. As the Belgian ability to fire decreased, the German engineers multiplied their effectiveness. The Belgian sands were running out.

The action was too violent, the effects too decisive, to continue for long. After several works had been put out of action, the Belgian commander saw the hopelessness of the situation. His great fortress, able to command the approaches to a country, had fallen prey to a band of men armed not with howitzers and cannon but with seven-pound blocks of TNT. Early in the afternoon of 11th May the fortress surrendered. It was not a new secret weapon but the revolutionary use of an old one that did it.

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*Condensed from Infantry Journal*



# The Last Enemy

A condensation of the book

*By Richard Hillary*



Richard Hillary, the devil-may-care young Oxford undergraduate who exchanged his place in an Oxford rowing crew for the cockpit of a Spitfire, personified the Battle of Britain hero. His book "The Last Enemy," written while he was convalescing from a long series of operations after he had been shot down, is a personal testimony which gives a vivid, compelling picture of the impact of war on the individual. Hillary was killed on active service in 1943; his book lives on as one of the classics of the war.

## **The Last Enemy**

I HAD BEEN at Oxford for two years—rowing a great deal, flying a little and reading somewhat—and was not yet twenty-one when the war broke out. While it would be false to suggest that the university was blissfully unaware of the impending disaster, it was certainly true that outside events had little effect on our easy-going way of life.

I had spent every vacation visiting the Continent. On one of these trips, shortly before the war, I went to Germany. A friend of mine felt the same urge, and we worked out the cheapest way to go. About this time I had been stroking one of the boat crews. Though I was a “week-end pilot” in the University Air Squadron, rowing was the only accomplishment in which I could get credit for being slightly better than average. We wrote to the German government expressing a wish to row in one of their regattas. They replied that they would be delighted, and offered to pay our expenses. We wrote back with appropriate gratification and, having collected eight others, on 3rd July 1938, we set forth.

We were to row against one of General Goering’s Prize Fours. We arrived at Bad Ems two days before the race, without a boat, and had to use a borrowed craft. The elegantly turned-out German crews, who came with carloads of supporters and set, determined faces, regarded us with contemptuous amusement. Shortly before the race, a member of a German crew harangued me about our

lackadaisical attitude and our decadent race. The German people would learn, he said, from our defeat. I suggested that he might wait until after the race before shooting off his mouth, but he was not listening.

Looking back, this race was a surprisingly accurate pointer to the course of the war. We were out of training, lacked any form of organization, and were quite hopelessly casual. We got off to such a clumsy start that we were several lengths behind at the beginning of the race. As we came to the bridge which was the half-way mark we must have been five lengths behind; but somebody spat on us. It was a tactical error. We covered the rest of the course as though pursued by fiends, and won the race. To the sullen resentment of our adversaries, General Goering had to surrender his cup; it disgraced our rooms for nearly a year until we sent it back.

THE OXFORD generation which went to war in 1939 was self-satisfied, disillusioned and spoilt. We had no Holy Grail in search of which we could lose ourselves. The war provided it, and gave us the opportunity to prove that our effete veneer was not as deep as our dislike of interference, and to demonstrate that, though undisciplined, we were a match for Hitler's dogma-fed youth.

September 3rd 1939 fell during the long vacation, and our University Air Squadron reported that day to the Volunteer Reserve Centre at Oxford.

THE WAR solved the problem of my career. As a fighter pilot I hoped for a concentration of amusement, fear and exaltation which it would be impossible to experience in any other way.

I was not disappointed.

We were drafted to an Initial Training Wing, where I found myself in command of a platoon. My fellow sergeants were farmers, bank clerks, estate agents, representatives of every class and calling. I was commissioned on the score of my experience in the University Air Squadron and I moved to another wing. Here I found myself among many old Oxford friends.



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This was the pre-Dunkirk "phony-war" period, and we were inclined to regard regulations as a nuisance. We never saw an aircraft and never attended a lecture. We took an hotel room and idled away six weeks, drinking and playing cards. That our behaviour was unco-operative did not occur to us. We had joined the air force to fly, and not to parade about like boy scouts. We didn't consider, then, that elementary training might be essential, or that a certain confusion was inevitable at the beginning of the war.

But when we were sent to a flying training school on the north-east coast of Scotland, we buckled down to a routine life of flying and lectures.

Thanks to a patient instructor, I gradually developed from a mediocre performer to a quite moderate pilot. For weeks my instructor, a likeable Scot with a dour sense of humour, sat in the cockpit behind me muttering, just loud enough for me to hear, about the bad luck of getting such a fathead for a pupil. Then one day he called down, "man, you can fly at last!"

The pilots on our course ranged from schoolboys of eighteen to men of twenty-six—raw material out of which had to be welded officers for Fighter, Bomber and Coastal Commands. There as the months went by, one could watch the gradual assimilation of these men, so diverse in their lives and habits, into the composite figure that is the air force pilot.

From time to time a squadron of long-range bombers would come dropping out of the sky. For a week or so they would make our station their headquarters for raids on Norway. One day nine set out and only four returned. I watched closely the pilots in the Mess that night, but their faces were expressionless: they played bridge as usual and discussed the next day's raid.

Then one day a Spitfire squadron dropped in. It was my first glimpse of the machines I hoped eventually to fly. The trim deceptive frailty of their lines was fascinating; I spent much of my spare time climbing on to their wings and inspecting the controls.

At the end of the course, I was posted to Army Co-operation,

which entailed further training at Old Sarum before we could graduate to Lysander reconnaissance planes, which were gloomily termed "flying coffins."

Old Sarum was close to Salisbury, and the towering steeple of the cathedral was a good landmark for the airfield. A few minutes flying to the south was the sea, and across that was France, peaceful in the quiet of the evening. Within a few weeks Britain's army was to be struggling desperately to get back across that narrow stretch of water, and the France we knew was to be no more.

In the midst of our training, the war news grew bad. Every night the Mess was crowded with air force officers, parked round the radio with silent, expressionless faces, listening to the extermination of France and the desperate retreat to Dunkirk.

Privately we learnt that Lysanders were hopping across the Channel two or three times daily to drop supplies to the besieged garrison at Calais, sometimes with a solitary one-gunned fighter for support. As the Lysander was supposed always to operate under a covering layer of fighters, we could imagine how desperate the situation must be.

THEN CAME Dunkirk: tired, ragged men who had once been an army, returning now without their equipment. After days on the beaches without sight of British planes, these men were bitter, and not unnaturally. They could not know that had the RAF not gained air superiority behind them, over Flanders, they would never have left Dunkirk alive.

For us the evacuation was a newspaper story, until three of us got the day off, drove to Brighton, and saw for ourselves. The beaches, streets and pubs were a crawling mass of soldiers, British, French and Belgian. They had no money but were being royally welcomed by the locals. They were very tired and very patient. It had been so long. What could a few more hours matter? The most frequent request was for somewhere to bathe their feet. We collected two French soldiers and a Belgian dispatch rider, and

## THE LAST ENEMY

took them off for a drink. The pub we chose was full of soldiers, and we were soon involved in half a dozen arguments over the whereabouts of our aircraft over Dunkirk. Knowing personally several pilots who had been killed, and with some knowledge of the true facts, we found it hard to keep our tempers.

The French soldiers were less bitter: while they had seen few British aircraft, they had seen no French at all. But our Belgian endorsed everything we said. "How could we expect to see many British planes?" he asked. "There was a heavy fog over the beaches and they were up above."

One fight, however, he had seen—a lone Spitfire among four Junkers. For him, he said, it had been symbolic. If that Spitfire came out on top, they would be rescued. He prayed, and his prayer was answered. It shot down two Germans, crippled a third, and the fourth made off.

We talked and drank well into the night. The returned soldiers were tired and relaxed, content to sit back, their troubles for the moment over. We were taut and expectant, braced by our first real contact with the war. Finally, through an alcoholic haze, we made our farewells and set off for Old Sarum. We were late and drove fast. There was no moon. Coming out of a bend, our car skidded, hung for a moment on two wheels, then turned over, once, twice. After extricating ourselves, we found that we hadn't even a scratch. "It looks," said one of my companions, "as though Fate doesn't want us to go out this way."

A FEW WEEKS later, all leave was cancelled, no one was allowed far from the airfield, and the invasion scare was on.

The government's appeal to the people to stay put and not to evacuate roused Britain to the imminence of disaster. It could actually happen. Britain's green and pleasant land might at any moment wake to the noise of thundering tanks, to the sight of an army dropping from the skies, and to the realization that it was too late. The civilian population woke up. It was their war.

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From the age of seventeen to seventy they came forward for the Home Guard. If they had no arms—and usually they hadn't—they drilled with brooms. The spirit was there.

OWING TO the sudden collapse of France and the consequent vulnerability of Britain, the Air Ministry had ordered fifteen of us to be transferred to fighter squadrons. Each looked at his neighbour as though he were suddenly an enemy. There were twenty of us; the five who would stay behind were to be drawn from a hat. It was my worst moment of the war, and I speak for all the others.

After the drawing—I was lucky—we left for Gloucestershire for a fortnight's training. There we learned of the German habit of stepping up their fighter escorts in layers all round their bombers, their excellence in carrying out a pre-arranged manoeuvre, and their confusion once their plan was disturbed.

We learned of the advantage of height, and of attacking from out of the sun; of the Germans' disinclination to fight on unfavourable terms; of the Messerschmitt's almost standardized method of evasion—a half roll followed by a vertical dive. We learned of the necessity to work as a squadron, and to understand thoroughly every command of the squadron leader whether given by radio or gesture. We learned to appreciate the contribution of our ground crews to a successful day's fighting. We learned that we should never follow a plane down after hitting it. This point was driven home by the example of five planes all of which followed each other down. Only the top machine survived.

And we learned, finally, to fly the Spitfire.

Though I suffered some trepidation before my first flight, I soon got the "feel" of the new machine enough to try it out in aerobatics. I put it through every manoeuvre I knew, and it responded beautifully. After that, I felt an exhilarating confidence. I could fly a Spitfire; it remained to be seen whether I could fight in one.

We also had to put in an oxygen climb to 28,000 feet, an air-firing exercise, formation attacks and numerous dog fights. The oxygen

climb was uneventful, but lengthy. Helmets, goggles and oxygen mask, gave me a feeling of restriction, and from then on I flew with goggles up. The results were to be far-reaching.

During the air-firing exercise, all eight guns roared out from a quick pressure on the fire button on the control stick. The noise through the closed-in cabin was muffled, but the tremendous recoil caused a drop in speed of forty miles per hour.

When we were sent up for a practice dog fight, two of us would go off and try to "shoot" each other down. On one occasion I went up with an instructor named Kilpatrick. We climbed to 10,000 feet, and he indicated that he would get on my tail. He succeeded. In frenzied eagerness I hurled my machine about the sky. Never, I felt, had such things been done to a plane; they must inevitably dislodge him. But my mirror showed that he was behind me like a patient nursemaid following a too boisterous charge.

Then he signalled to me to get on his tail and stay there. I carried out the first part of my order and started to pursue him in ever-tightening circles. I attempted to get him in my sights, but could never quite succeed. I kept expecting to catch him, but these circles were making me dizzy. Then I glanced in my mirror: he had turned the tables and was now following me, his guns in position to shoot me down. I was "dead" long ago.

On landing, Kilpatrick told me of the slight use of aerobatics in battle. A loop or a slow roll presented a target your opponent could easily keep in his sights. The best manoeuvres for evasion were a half roll and a controlled spin—especially if you had been hit, for it gave an impression of being out of control. For the rest it was a question of turning inside your opponent, thinking quickly and clearly, and breaking away quickly.

Our training ended, and it was announced that 603 City of Edinburgh Squadron had three vacancies. Three of us who had been together at Oxford, Peter Pease, Colin Pinckney and I, put our names down and were sent to join Flight "B" which was operating near Montrose in Scotland.

## THE LAST ENEMY

For the most part, life at Montrose was very agreeable. The airfield lay just beyond the town, parallel to the sea, one edge of the landing field merging into the dunes. The squadron was comparatively inactive, though we knew that at a not very distant date the war would be upon us.

ONE DAY Peter Pease and I were sent by train to Edinburgh to fly up a couple of new Spitfires. Peter had never had much to say about the war, and on the train I felt an urge to get behind his natural polite reserve. So I asked him straight out his reasons for fighting. He evaded the question at first, but I pressed him, and he looked at me with that slow smile of his. "I would say that I was fighting the war to rid the world of fear—of the fear of fear is perhaps what I mean. If the Germans win this war, nobody except little Hitlers will dare do anything. All courage will die out of the world—the courage to love, to create, to take risks, whether physical or intellectual or moral. Thus all spontaneity will die out of the world. The oxygen breathed by the soul, so to speak, will vanish and mankind will wither."

"That's all negative," I said. "Isn't there something positive you want?"

"Of course there is. What I want is to see a better world."

"What do you mean by better?" I challenged him. "Christian?"

"Yes, Christian, of course. It isn't only that I am Christian by faith; I don't know of any other way of life worth fighting for. Christianity means to me, on the social plane, freedom, man's humanity to man. I believe that we should all make our contribution to the betterment of humanity. You don't agree. I can see that."

"You're quite right," I said, "I don't. I think your Christianity clouds the issue. To be brutal about it, I say I am fighting this war because I believe that in war one can swiftly develop all one's faculties to a degree it would normally take half a lifetime to achieve. That's why I am in the air force. For in a Spitfire we're back to war as it ought to be. Back to individual battle, to total

## THE LAST ENEMY

responsibility for one's own fate, to self-reliance. One either kills or is killed; and it's damned exciting. The mass of mankind leaves me completely cold."

"You're a fraud, Richard," Peter said cheerfully. "And I am sure you will change your tune. Something bigger than you or me is coming out of this; something that will make you forget yourself."

"I doubt it," I said; and at that we left it.

WHEN WE got back to Montrose, we were greeted with exciting news. "We're on our way!" The whole squadron was moving south to Hornchurch, an aerodrome twelve miles east of London on the Thames estuary. For us the war had begun.

Our relief squadron was already coming in, and in a few minutes we roared across the aerodrome and headed south.

Twenty-four of us flew south that 10th day of August 1940: of those twenty-four, eight were to fly back.

AT HORNCHURCH planes were already in action. One flight started coming in about half an hour after we landed, smoke stains along the leading edges of the wings showing that all the guns had been fired. "You don't have to look for Jerries," we were told. "You have to look for a way out."

At this time the Germans were making a determined attempt to wipe out our fighter force. From dawn till dusk the sky was filled with Messerschmitt fighters; there were comparatively few bombers. The first attack usually came over about breakfast time and from then until eight o'clock at night we were almost continuously in the air. We ate when we could.

On the morning after our arrival, the voice of the controller came unhurried over the loudspeaker, telling us to take off. I climbed into the cockpit and felt an empty sensation in the pit of my stomach. That morning, I knew, I was to kill for the first time. That I might be killed or injured did not occur to me. I wondered idly what he was like, this man I would kill. Was he young, was

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he fat, would he die with the Fuehrer's name on his lips, or would he die alone, in that last moment conscious only of himself as a man? I would never know. Then I was being strapped in, my mind automatically checking the controls, and we were off.

We ran into them at 18,000 feet, twenty yellow-nosed Messerschmitts, about 500 feet above us. Our squadron strength was eight, and as they came down we went into line astern and turned head-on to them. I could almost feel the leading Nazi pilot push forward on his stick to bring his guns to bear on our leading machine. At the same moment our section leader quickly nosed up and led us over them in a steep climbing turn. In two vital seconds they lost their advantage. I saw our leader let go a burst of fire at the leading plane, saw the Nazi put his machine into a half roll, and knew that he was mine. I kicked the rudder to the left to get him at right angles, turned the gun button to "Fire," and let go in a four-second burst. He came right through my sights and I saw the tracers from all eight guns thud home. For a second he seemed to hang motionless; then a jet of red flame shot upward and he spun to the ground.

For the next few minutes I was too busy to think of anything, but when, after a short while, they made off over the Channel, my mind began to work again. It had happened.

My first emotion was one of satisfaction, at a job adequately done, at the final logical conclusion to months of specialized training. And then I had a feeling of the essential rightness of it. He was dead and I was alive; it could so easily have been the other way round. I realized in that moment just how lucky among soldiers a fighter pilot is. His emotions are those of the duellist—cool, precise, impersonal. He is privileged to kill well.

After the first two days, we determined not to let ourselves be caught from above. We would fly on the reciprocal of the course given us by the controller until we got to 15,000 feet, and then fly back again, climbing all the time. Thus we kept the enemy below us, and were in position to deliver a squadron attack. If caught at a disadvantage, they always turned back for the Channel.



## THE LAST ENEMY

During that August and September we were always outnumbered. After a few seconds we always broke up our squadron attacks, and the sky was a smoke trail of individual dog fights. The squadron then came home individually. After an hour, there would be a check-up on who was missing. Often a telephone call would tell of some pilot who had made a forced landing in another field. One sergeant pilot was shot down four times but always turned up unhurt. But the telephone wasn't always so welcome. It might be a rescue squad announcing the number of a crashed machine; then another name would be crossed off the list. At that time, the losing of pilots was somehow impersonal; nobody, I think, felt any great emotion—there simply wasn't time.

ABOUT SEVEN O'CLOCK one evening came the voice of the controller: "603 Squadron take off; further instructions in the air."

We made a dash for our machines and within two minutes were off the ground. In a few minutes we reached 15,000 feet. We then turned about and flew in an all-out climb, thus coming out of the sun.

Over the radio came the voice of the controller, with instructions; we were to intercept about twenty enemy fighters at 25,000 feet. Then quite clearly I heard the Germans excitedly calling each other over the radio. I switched my set to "send" and called out "*Halts Maul!*" and all the German invective I could remember. To my delight I heard one of them answer, "You feelthy Englishmen, we will teach you how to speak to a German." These radio mix-ups were not infrequent.

I looked down. It was a completely cloudless sky. Way below lay the English countryside, stretching lazily into the distance, a quite extraordinary picture of green and purple in the setting sun. We were at 28,000 feet. At that moment I heard a "Tally-ho!" and our leader dropped down in a slow dive in the direction of the approaching planes.

"O.K. Line astern."

They were about 2,000 feet below us, but must have spotted us

at the same moment, for they were forming a protective circle, one behind the other, which is a defence formation hard to break.

"Going down!"

One after the other we peeled off in a power dive. In a few seconds the sky was a bedlam of machines; I got in a four-second burst on one. Several others were knocked down. Then suddenly there was silence and not a plane to be seen. I noticed then that I was very tired and hot. Sweat was streaming down my face.

Flying about the sky on one's own was not healthy. I still had some ammunition left, and, wanting to use it to good purpose, I looked round the sky for friendly fighters with whom I might join up. About a mile away I saw a formation of some forty Hurricanes, and set off in their direction. About 200 yards from the rear machine, I looked down; 5,000 feet below was another formation of fifty machines flying in the same direction.

Then I suddenly woke up. There were far more machines flying together than the British could ever muster over one spot. I looked closely at my "Hurricanes;" sure enough, there were swastikas on their tails. They seemed oblivious of my presence; I had the sun behind me and a glorious opportunity. I let go a three-second burst into the rear machine. It flicked on to its back and spun out of sight. Feeling like an irresponsible schoolboy who must inevitably be found out, I glanced round me. Nobody had noticed. I could have repeated the performance, but I felt it inadvisable to tempt Providence too far. I made off home.

SEPTEMBER 3rd dawned dark and overcast. We came out on to the tarmac at about eight o'clock. I was worried. My plane had been fitted with a new cockpit hood, which would not slide open, so I couldn't bail out quickly if I had to. The corporal-fitter and I set upon it with a heavy file, furiously filing and oiling. At last the hood began to move: but at 10 o'clock it was still sticking firmly half-way. At 10.15, what I had feared happened. Down the loud-speaker came the controller's emotionless voice: "603 Squadron

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take off; further orders in the air. 603 Squadron take off, quickly."

As I pressed the starter and the engine roared into life, the corporal stepped back and crossed his fingers significantly. The leading section took off in a cloud of dust; my squadron leader looked across and put up his thumbs. I nodded and opened up, to take off for the last time from Hornchurch.

At about 12,000 feet we came up through the clouds: I looked down and saw them spread out below me like layers of whipped cream. I peered anxiously ahead, for the sun made it difficult to see, and we had been warned of at least fifty enemy fighters. They must have been 1,000 feet above us when we sighted them coming straight on like a swarm of locusts. I remember cursing and going automatically into line astern: then we were in among them and it was each man for himself.

The next ten minutes was a blur of twisting machines and tracer bullets. One Messerschmitt went down in a sheet of flame on my right, and a Spitfire hurtled past in a half roll. Then, just below and to my left, I saw what I had been praying for—a Messerschmitt climbing and away from the sun. I closed in and gave him a two-second burst: fabric ripped off the wing and black smoke poured from the engine, but he did not go down. Like a fool, I did not break away, but put in another three-second burst. Red flames shot upward and he spiralled out of sight.

At the same moment a terrific explosion knocked the control stick from my hand and the whole machine quivered like a stricken animal; in a second, the cockpit was a mass of flames. I reached up to open the hood. It would not move. I tore off my straps and managed to force it back; but this took time, and when I dropped back into the seat and reached for the stick to turn the plane on its back, the heat was so intense that I felt myself going. I remember a second of sharp agony, remember thinking, "So this is it!" and putting both hands up to my eyes. Then I passed out.

When I regained consciousness I was free of the machine and falling rapidly. I pulled the rip cord of my parachute and checked

my descent with a jerk. Looking down, I saw that my trouser leg was burnt off, that I was over the sea, and that the English coast was far away. I flopped into the sea with my parachute round me.

The water was not too cold and my life jacket, my "Mae West," kept me afloat. I noticed that the skin of my hands was dead-white up to my wrists: I felt faintly sick from the smell of burnt flesh. By closing one eye, I could see my lips jutting out like tyres.

After about half an hour my teeth started chattering, and to quiet them I kept up a tuneless chant, varying it from time to time with futile calls for help. The water now seemed much colder and I noticed with surprise that the sun had gone in. I looked down at my hands and, not seeing them, realized that I had gone blind.

It was unlikely, I concluded, that I should be picked up. So I was going to die. It came to me like that—I was going to die and I was not afraid. The manner of my approaching death appalled me, but I felt only a profound curiosity and a sense of satisfaction that within a few minutes or a few hours I was to learn the great answer. I decided that it should be within a few minutes and, reaching up, managed to unscrew the valve of my Mae West. The air escaped in a rush and my head went under. I swallowed a large quantity of water, came up and tried again, to find that I was so enmeshed in my parachute that I could not keep my face under. I lay back and laughed. By this time I was probably not entirely normal, but there was something irresistibly comical in my grand gesture of suicide being so simply thwarted.

It is said that a dying man relives his whole life in one rapid kaleidoscope. I merely thought gloomily of the squadron returning, of my mother at home, and of the few people who would miss me. I began to feel a terrible loneliness, and knew that delirium was approaching. Finally, as in a dream, I heard somebody shout: it seemed far away and quite unconnected with me. . . . Then willing arms were dragging me over the side; my parachute was taken off; a voice said, "O.K., Joe, it's one of ours and still kicking." I was safe.

Watchers on the coast had seen me come down, and after three

hours search the Margate lifeboat found me fifteen miles out in the North Sea. While in the water I had been numb and had felt little pain. Now I was quite conscious and, as I began to thaw out, the agony was such that I could have cried out. It seemed to take an eternity to reach shore. I was put into an ambulance and driven rapidly to the hospital. They cut off my uniform and I gave the nurse the requisite information about my next of kin. Then, to my infinite relief, I felt a hypodermic syringe pushed into my arm and I lost consciousness.

I SEEMED to be falling slowly through a dark pit. I was hot now, on fire and screaming soundlessly. The sickly smell of death was in my nostrils and a confused roar of sound. Then all was quiet.

Someone was holding my arms.

"Quiet now, you're going to be all right."

"Is that you, nurse? What have they done to me?"

"They've put something on your face and hands to stop them hurting and you won't be able to see for a while. Don't talk."

I can recollect no moments of acute agony in the four days I spent in that hospital; only a great sea of pain in which I floated almost with comfort. My face and hands had been sprayed with tannic acid which had set into a hard, black cement. My arms were propped up in front of me, the fingers extended like witch's claws, and my body was hung loosely on straps just clear of the bed. My eyes were coated with a thick layer of gentian violet. Every three hours I was injected with morphia, so I was mainly in a semi-stupor.

The memory of it remains a confused blur. An appalling thirst, and hundreds of bottles of ginger beer. Being blind, and not feeling strong enough to care. The smell of ether. Matron once doing my dressing with three orderlies holding my arms; a nurse weeping quietly at the head of the bed. A sensation of time slowing down, and an overriding apathy. My parents coming down to see me, and their wonderful self-control. For the sake of decorum my face had been covered with white gauze. We spoke little; my only

coherent remark being that I had no wish to go on living if I were to look like Alice, a former maid of ours who had been burnt and badly disfigured.

Finally I was moved to a London hospital, arriving so exhausted that I fainted. The house surgeon took the opportunity to give me an anaesthetic and remove the tannic acid from my left hand. During the time I was under I saw Peter Pease killed.

He was after another machine, leaning forward with a smile at the corner of his mouth. Suddenly from nowhere a Messerschmitt was on his tail. At the top of my voice I shouted: "Peter, for God's sake, look out behind!" I saw the Messerschmitt open up and a burst of fire hit Peter's machine, which turned slowly on its back and dived to the ground. I came to, screaming his name, with two nurses and a doctor holding me down.

Two days later I had a short letter from Colin, hoping I was getting better and telling me that Peter was dead.

Slowly I came back to life. My morphia injections were less frequent and my mind began to clear. At first my dressing had to be changed every two hours during the day, and as this took over an hour my nurses had practically no time off. It was entirely due to them that both my hands were not amputated.

Then one day I found that I could see. My nurse was bending over me doing my dressings, and she seemed to me very beautiful. I watched her for a long time, grateful that my first glimpse of the world should be of something so perfect. Finally I said: "Sue, you never told me that your eyes were so blue."

For a moment she started at me. Then, "Oh, Dick, how wonderful!" and she fled to find the other nurses. I felt absurdly elated.

The district was blitzed regularly. Night after night we heard the scream and crump of falling bombs. The Germans always seemed to choose a moment when my eyes were being irrigated and my poor nurse was poised above me with a glass undine in her hand. One night I had the unpleasant sensation of hearing a stick of bombs gradually approaching, the first some way off, the next

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closer and the third shaking the building. My nurse threw herself across my bed. But the fourth bomb never fell, and she got up quickly, looking embarrassed.

After two months I was sufficiently recovered to be operated on. The air force plastic surgeon, Archibald McIndoe, regarded me speculatively with a pair of tired, friendly eyes. "Made a thorough job of it, didn't you?" he said. He took a scalpel and tapped lightly on something white showing through the red granulating knuckle of my right forefinger. "Bone," he remarked laconically. He looked at the eyelids and pursed his lips. "You need four new ones."

An eye specialist came in to look at me. "Can't close your eyes at all, can you?" he asked.

"No, sir," I said.

"Well, we'll have to cover that left eye or you'll never use it again. You'll go to the Plastic Hospital tomorrow."

When my turn at the operating table came I was not uncomfortable; apart from a slight pricking of the eyes I felt no pain. There was the operation, then five boring days without reading; then McIndoe took the dressing from my eyes and I saw again. "A couple of real horse blinkers you've got there," he said; and for a day or so that is what they felt like. In order to see in front of me I had to turn my face up to the ceiling. The eyelids moulded in very rapidly, however, and soon I could raise and lower them at will. It was a remarkable piece of surgery, an operation in which McIndoe had never scored a failure.

After a fortnight at a near-by convalescent home I went back to the hospital for two lower eyelids. This time when the dressings were taken off I looked exactly like an orang-utan. McIndoe had pinched out two semicircular ledges of skin to allow for contraction of the new lids; what was not absorbed was to be sliced off when I came in for my new upper lip. The relief, however, was enormous, for now I could close my eyes almost completely and did not sleep with them rolled up with the whites showing.

Once again I retired to the convalescent home. It was January

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1941 when I returned to the hospital. I was not cheered by the discovery that the only available bed was in the ward which housed some of the worst cases. Opposite me was Squadron Leader Gleave with a flap graft on his nose and an exposed nerve on his forehead; the nurse could not drug him enough to stop the pain. On my left was Mark Moundsman, who had trained with me in Scotland and was awaiting an operation on his eyelids. Beyond him was a blind man, blown up and burnt at Dunkirk, with a complete new face and no hands.

I reached the operating theatre feeling quite emotionless. When I came round, I was bandaged from forehead to lip and unable to breathe through my nose. Next evening a doctor took the bandages off my eyes; there were two sets of semicircular stitches under them and I noticed that my left eyebrow had been lifted to pair it with the other. Eight days after the operation the dressing was taken from my lip and the stitches cut from under my eyes, to the accompaniment of appreciative purrs from the doctor's satellites. I asked for a mirror and gazed at the result. Though it was a surgical masterpiece, it was a blow to my vanity: the new lip was dead-white and thinner than its predecessor. I was not very gracious.

About this time Edmonds, the worst-burnt pilot in the air force, was re-admitted to the hospital and placed in the bed next to mine. When he had first been brought to McIndoe he was unrecognizable and had lain for months in a bath of his own suppuration. McIndoe had performed two emergency operations, and had then left it to time and careful dressings to heal him enough for more. It would take five years to build him a new face. Never once had Edmonds complained. He was completely cheerful, and such was his charm that after two minutes one never noticed his disfigurement. I felt very small when I remembered some of my own outbursts.

THERE WERE set-backs. The hospital was bombed and all the patients shifted. There were infections in the grafts and an emergency operation for mastoid. The long job of making my claws into



hands began. I lay in that hospital and watched summer slowly turn to winter. During all that time I had ample opportunity for serious thinking.

Something had been happening in my thoughts, in my way of looking at life. Just what it was I could not be sure. During training, my life was too full of good times, during battle too full of action, during hospitalization too full of pain, to find an opportunity to add it up, make a sum, think it through.

Now, during convalescence, I seemed to be groping for a new concept, struggling to redefine the values that were to govern my life. I vaguely sensed that the slap-dash, egocentric attitudes that had served me well enough as an undergraduate at pre-war Oxford would no longer serve. Yet I had nothing to take their place. My awakening came suddenly, one night.

For some time now I had been allowed to be up and about on my own, and on this night I went up to London. A heavy raid was on when I arrived. At the station I managed to get hold of a taxi, but my driver seemed doubtful whether we should be able to go very far. Some machine dropped a flare and in the sudden brightness before it was put out I saw that the street was empty. What cars there were were parked along the kerb and deserted.

"I'm afraid we'll be stopped, sir," said the cabby. At that moment there was a heavy crump unpleasantly close and glass flew across the street.

"See if you can find a pub and we'll stop there," I shouted.

He drew his cab up before a dimly lit sign. "The George and Dragon." Inside there was a welcoming glow of bright lights, and we soon had our faces deep in mugs of mild-and-bitter.

Though at the hospital I had dozed off regularly to the lullaby of the German night offensive, I had never heard anything like this. The volume of noise shut out all thought, and there was no lull. It was an orchestra of madmen playing incessantly. I thought, "God! What a stupid waste if I were to die now." I wished with all my heart that I was down a shelter.

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"We'd be better off underground tonight, sir, and no mistake." It was my cab driver speaking.

"Nonsense," I said. "We couldn't be drinking this down there," and I took a long pull at my beer.

I was pushing the glass across the counter for a refill when we heard it coming. Everyone was diving for the floor. The barmaid (she was of considerable bulk) sank from view with a desperate slowness behind the counter and I flung myself tight up against the other side, my cab driver beside me.

My hands were pressed tight over my ears but still the detonation deafened me. The floor rose up and smashed against my face, the swing-door tore off its hinges and crashed over a table, glass splinters flew across the room, and behind the bar every bottle seemed to be breaking. The lights went out, but there was no darkness. An orange glow from across the street shone through the wall and threw everything into a strong relief.

I scrambled unsteadily to my feet and was leaning over the bar to see what had happened to the barmaid when a voice said: "Anyone hurt?" and there was an Auxiliary Fire Service man shining a torch. At that everyone began to move, slowly and reluctantly as though coming out of a dream. Only the barmaid failed to get up.

"I think there is someone hurt behind the bar," I said. The fireman nodded and went out to return almost immediately with two stretcher-bearers. They got her on the stretcher and disappeared. She had escaped with little more than a severe cut on the head.

When we had found our way out into the street, the AFS man turned to us. "If you have nothing very urgent on hand," he said, "I wonder if you'd help here for a bit. The next house was hit and there's someone buried in there." It was clearly lit by the flames—a heap of bricks and mortar, wooden beams and doors, and one framed picture, unbroken. It was the first time that I had seen a building newly blasted.

We dug, or rather we pushed, pulled, heaved and strained, I

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somewhat ineffectually because of my hands; I don't know for how long, but it seemed endless. From time to time I was aware of figures round me: an air raid warden, his face expressionless under a steel helmet; once a soldier swearing savagely in a quiet monotone; and the cab driver, his face pouring sweat.

And so we came to the woman. It was her feet that we saw first and, whereas before we had worked doggedly, now we worked with a sort of frenzy. She was not quite buried, and through the gap between two beams we could see that she was still alive. We got the child out first. It was handed along carefully and with an odd sort of reverence by the warden, but it was dead. She must have been holding it to her in the bed when the bomb came.

Finally we made a gap wide enough for the bed to be dragged out. The woman who lay there looked middle-aged. She lay on her back and her eyes were closed. Her face through the dirt and streaked blood was the face of a thousand working women; her body under the cotton nightdress was heavy.

Round me I heard voices. "Where is the ambulance?" "Don't move her!" "Let her have some air!"

I was at the head of the bed, and looking down into that tired, bloodstreaked, workworn face I had a sense of complete unreality. The woman opened her eyes and reached out her arms instinctively for the child. Then she started to weep, quite soundlessly, with no sobbing. Tears were running down her cheeks when she lifted her eyes to mine.

"Thank you, sir," she said and took my hand in hers. She was obviously dying. And then, looking at me again, she said, "I see they got you, too."

I pulled the cap down over my eyes and walked out into the street. With difficulty I kept my pace to a walk. I wanted to run, to run anywhere away from that scene.

It started, small but insistent, deep inside me. It was coming from a long way back, welling up uncontrollably. I was helpless with rage. The woman's death had been unjust, a crime, a sin

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against mankind—words which even as they passed through my mind seemed to me bitterly futile.

That that woman should so die was an enormity so great it was terrifying. It was not just the German bombs, or the German Air Force, or even the German mentality, but a feeling of the very essence of anti-life that no words could convey. This was what had filled me with unutterable rage. For I had recognized in that moment what Peter and the others had instantly recognized as evil and to be destroyed utterly. I saw now that it was not crime, it was Evil itself. With awful clarity I saw myself suddenly as I was. Great God, that I could have been so self-centred, so arrogant!

How long I had been walking I don't know, but the drone of aircraft had ceased and the all-clear must have sounded.

So Peter had been right. It was impossible to look only to oneself, to take from life and not to give. He had known, and the others had known, that no price was too dear to achieve this victory.

But what could I do? I wanted to seize a gun and fire it, hit somebody, break a window, anything. I saw the months ahead of me, hospital, hospital, hospital, operation after operation, and I was in despair. Somehow I got myself home, undressed, and fell into a troubled sleep. But I did not rest; when I awoke the problem was still within me, beating insistently in my mind.

For the present, at least I could write. I could tell how my self-centred delusions had been swept away by what I had experienced. I would write for these men who had taught me the truth, for Peter and for the others. And to whom would I address this book? That too I knew. To that humanity I had once professed to ignore.

If I could do this thing, I would have justified, at least in some measure, my right to fellowship with my dead, and to the friendship of those with courage and steadfastness who were still living, and who would go on fighting until the ideals for which their comrades had died were stamped for ever on the future of civilization.

*Condensed from the book "The Last Enemy," published by Macmillan, London*

## Miss Victoria

*By Patricia Strauss*

IN THE GREY drabness of Lambeth, the house with the yellow door stood out like a bright smile on a rainy day. During the early years of the war three maiden ladies lived in this house—the Drummond sisters, known to neighbours as Miss Jean, Miss Frances and Miss Victoria. They were charming, simple people, fond of animals and often to be seen working in their little garden.

Miss Victoria was tall, with a strong, gentle face, a quiet voice, and a painfully shy manner. Every now and then Miss Victoria went away. The neighbours assumed that she was visiting friends.

One morning in 1941 the people of Lambeth woke up to find Miss Victoria's name in the headlines. Lloyd's had awarded her its medal—the highest award that can be given to men of the merchant navy, and one never before bestowed on a woman. Also, the King was conferring upon her the MBE. Miss Victoria, the papers noted, was the only qualified woman engineer in the British Merchant Service. The neighbours could scarcely believe that the fastidious, retiring Miss Victoria had spent many months of her life in the hot, oily, noisy engine-rooms of tramp ships.

From childhood Miss Victoria had shown a most ungirlish interest in engineering. Her Scottish parents, who must have been very understanding people, allowed her to serve an apprenticeship in a factory in Dundee. Actual contact with engines did not "cure" her of her unusual passion. She went to sea and served for a time

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as third engineer on a Blue Funnel Line boat running to Australia.

When war was declared she gave up a good job on land and signed on with the Merchant Navy. All through Dunkirk she worked unfalteringly in the engine-room of her ship. Then she went quietly back to her little house.

Later the crew of the *Bonita*, a merchant ship bound for America, were amazed to find that their second engineer was a woman. They were more amazed to discover that she was no amateur, that she could get greater speed from the engines than anyone else ever had. When they asked her to explain, she said: "Oh, I just talk nicely to them. You can coax or lead engines—you must never drive them." Which is not the kind of answer sailors understand. But forty-eight hours after they left port the crew owed their lives to Miss Victoria.

The *Bonita* was 400 miles from land when a Nazi four-engined bomber swooped down for the kill. Miss Victoria rushed to the engine-room. The first bomb explosion flung her heavily against the levers. She picked herself up, called together the engine-room crew and gave them an order. It consisted of just two words: "Get out!" She gave them a chance for their lives but stayed down there herself.

An unarmed vessel has only one defence against a bomber. The ship must keep a steady course until the plane is in bombing position. Then the helm must be swung hard over so that the ship moves out of the path of the bomb. It is a matter of inches and seconds. Increased speed from the engine-room would give the captain a chance to turn the clumsy hulk quickly and thus outsmart the bomber overhead. And Miss Victoria was alone down in the engine-room. One of the ship's officers, recounting the adventure afterwards, said:

"In ten minutes she had 'talked' to those engines to such good purpose that our miserable speed of nine knots had risen to twelve-and-a-half. The bombing fractured pipes, split electric wires and broke tubes. The main engine stop-valve started a joint, and scalding steam whizzed past her head. With anyone less skilled down there,



Alone in the engine-room of an unarmed merchantman, Victoria Drummond kept the damaged machinery working through a bombing raid. She was awarded the Lloyd's War Medal (below). The citation recorded that "her devotion to duty saved the ship from more serious damage and her disregard of danger inspired all on board"



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that pipe might have burst under the extra pressure, but she nursed it through each explosion, easing down when she judged from the nearness of the plane's engines that the bombs were about to fall, holding on to a stanchion as they burst, and then opening up the steam again.

"I saw her once when I looked down the skylight to shout a few words of cheer to her. She was standing on the control platform, surrounded by spent machine-gun bullets which had fallen through the skylight, one hand stretched straight above her head holding down the throttle control as if trying by her touch to urge another pound of steam through the straining pipes. Her face, as expressionless as the bulkhead behind her, was turned up towards the sunlight, but she did not see me. From the top of her forehead down her long face, completely closing one eye, trickled a wide black streak of fuel oil."

Three times the ship's swing, under increased speed, prevented the bomber from driving home the final, death-dealing blow. Finally, bombs and ammunition exhausted, he flew away. Miss Victoria eased down the speed. The boats and decks were shattered and the ship was making water. But they were still afloat.

When the *Bonita* docked in Virginia, the people of Norfolk heard the story from the men (Miss Victoria herself would never say a word about the affair). Greatly impressed, they sent 2,500 dollars to the Mayor of Lambeth to buy a mobile canteen—the "Victoria Drummond Canteen"—for use in air raids.

*Condensed from Vogue*



## **The Prisoners of Differdange**

*By Edwin Muller*

FOR FIFTEEN years certain people in the town of Differdange, Luxembourg, had been trying to find a certain German. They had a score to settle with him.

They knew his name, Johann Punzel. They knew his serial number in the German Army, and the fact that he had been a member of the Nazi Party. But, until 3rd June 1955, they never got hold of him.

The thing that Punzel had done, the reason why they were looking for him, happened in the spring of 1940. The war in Poland was over, the vast armies of Germany and the Western Allies faced each other along the Maginot Line, and Differdange lay between. But Luxembourg was neutral and the townspeople of Differdange hoped that the German invasion would never take place.

Then, at dawn on 10th May, they were wakened by the roar of planes. They looked up at a sky full of parachutes. The Germans had come. Soon the French came too. Columns of their cavalry rode out from the Maginot Line and occupied the town.

By the time the first shots were fired, the roads from Differdange were jammed with fugitives. The Hadir steelworks, which employed 4,000 of the town's 15,000 inhabitants, closed down. But one group of employees was called together: the forty-odd steelworkers who also did duty as a fire brigade. They were free to go, the works manager said, but shells might hit the steelworks and

start fires. It was to the advantage of the town that the property be preserved. He called for volunteers.

After a moment's silence, Joseph Weiler, a works foreman and chief of the brigade, stepped forward. "I will stay," he said.

Fourteen others volunteered, among them Nicolas Wallers, an ambulance man of the company's infirmary. Wallers's wife insisted on staying too. Someone, she said, would have to prepare food for the men. Later three more men joined the group, bringing the total number to eighteen.

They settled down in the air raid shelter under the main office building. Through the thick walls they could hear the noise of machine-gun fire and exploding shells. The battle lasted two days. Then, on the night of 11th May the French left and the German paratroopers poured in, followed by tanks and artillery.

At first the Germans treated the firemen in a not-unfriendly way. There was work for them to do; cleaning up debris, burying dead animals, even extinguishing a few fires that broke out in houses where careless soldiers were billeted.

Then, after two weeks, there was a sudden change. On 27th and 28th May, Differdange was bombarded heavily from the Maginot Line. The fire was extraordinarily accurate. With uncanny precision the shells found the German ammunition dumps and the areas where tanks and other heavy equipment were camouflaged. Great damage was done.

Late on the night of the 29th a detail of military police went to the air raid shelter and kicked the sleeping firemen awake. They searched everybody in the room, including Mrs. Wallers. With detection equipment they checked all wires and electrical outlets in the room; they tested the walls with hammers. At last they went away, but guards were posted round the factory. The firemen could no longer move about freely.

At intervals the bombardment continued. Three days later the military police came again to the steelworks and ordered the firemen to assemble in the street. In double file they were marched

past a place where soldiers were digging a big hole. The same horrible thought occurred to more than one of the firemen; the hole was big enough to contain eighteen bodies.

Farther on they were halted at a cement wall next to a small garage, and lined up. A lieutenant appeared, a hard-faced man with a duelling scar on one cheek. He walked slowly down the line, staring each one in the face. Then he spoke:

"We have established that one or more of you have sent signals to the enemy, enabling them to direct their fire. If the guilty person or persons do not confess, all of you will be shot."

The group was then locked in the garage. It was dimly lit by one barred window. The damp concrete floor was ten by fourteen feet. Mrs. Wallers clung to her husband, sobbing. Some of the men also wept; others were on their knees, praying.

Weiler spoke up in a firm voice: "Has anyone anything to say about the charge which has been made?"

Nobody had. But some began hysterically accusing others. Weiler's voice cut through the discord: "Pull yourselves together. We can get out of this only if we face the Germans like men."

The hubbub subsided. Time dragged on. At last the door opened and the lieutenant appeared. "Are the guilty ready to confess?" Silence. "Very well. The execution will take place in one hour."

The lieutenant beckoned to a corporal, a fair-haired, blue-eyed man of about thirty. "Corporal Punzel, you will guard these men until their execution. When the hour has passed they are to be brought out two at a time. Their grave has been dug."

The corporal saluted and the door was closed.

JOHANN PUNZEL was born in 1910 in the Bavarian town of Pressig, where his parents had a delicatessen shop. In the First World War his elder brother was killed.

Then came the 1920's, when wild inflation nearly destroyed the middle class of Germany. The Punzel family went steadily downhill. In that decade the worst off were the youth of Germany. Their

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lives were frustrated and despairing. No way to earn a living, nowhere to go. The suicide rate rose.

Johann alternated between occasional jobs and helping with the dying delicatessen shop. In those days Hitler seemed a ray of hope to youths like Johann. He joined the Nazi Party when he was seventeen. He saw and heard Hitler, and was carried away by the glamour of that evil genius.

Presently he got a full-time clerical job at Party branch headquarters in Pressig. At the time war came Johann was married to a pretty, dark-haired girl. They had two babies. He was called into the army and did well. When his regiment, the 330th Infantry, marched into Differdange he was a corporal.

PUNZEL stood outside the garage door, somewhat confused. An order was still an order and had to be carried out. But those people there—the woman he could hear sobbing . . . He decided to “pass the buck.” Leaving guards posted, he hurried off to find Lieutenant Kelch, the regimental adjutant. Kelch was too busy to be bothered. “The matter belongs in the judge advocate’s office,” he said. “Go and see them about the sentence.”

Punzel went back to the prisoners. They surrounded him, clamouring that they were innocent. Joseph Weiler quietened them and told Punzel that the charge was without foundation, that none of them had had any opportunity to signal the French.

“You have searched the air raid shelter. Cannot a further search be made?”

Punzel was impressed. And then it occurred to him that the lieutenant had spoken of carrying out the sentence against “these men.” He had said nothing about the woman. He pulled Mrs. Wallers outside and found a Wehrmacht lorry bound for the town of Luxembourg. He put her into it and the lorry drove away.

At the judge advocate’s office Punzel asked the lieutenant in charge if the sentence could not be deferred until a further search for evidence could be made. To his surprise the officer said he

would look into the matter and told him to come back in three-quarters of an hour.

When Punzel returned the answer was: "No. The sentence is to be carried out unless the guilty confess. But it has been decided to reprieve them for twenty-four hours. However, if the French bombardment is resumed the prisoners are to be shot at once."

Punzel was more and more troubled. By now he was convinced that the men were innocent. But he could do nothing to save them.

Some little things he could do. He moved the prisoners from the damp garage to a dry store-room across the street. He had food and hot coffee taken to them from a regimental canteen.

That night Punzel slept badly. He kept listening for the French bombardment—which would mean the immediate death of the prisoners. But they would die anyway next afternoon. . . .

Next morning he went again to see the prisoners. They had nothing to say except to plead for mercy. Presently Punzel went to the judge advocate's office, not to see the lieutenant but to make sure he was away at lunch. Then the corporal went back to the store-room, noting that there were no soldiers near by except the guards, his own men. He had some words with them. They looked at him curiously.

Punzel went into the room and asked one of the prisoners if he could get a lorry at the steelworks. The man stared at him stupidly, but finally said that he could. Punzel sent two of the guards with him.

When the lorry arrived Punzel went into the room and spoke hurriedly: "You are free, all of you. Get into the lorry quickly."

At first stunned silence, then a bedlam of laughing and sobbing. They crowded round him, tried to shake his hand, to give him their watches and money. He shook them off.

"Be quiet. Get into the lorry and go."

Nicolas Kremer, the youngest of the firemen, asked for his name. He gave it and his serial number, 105275A. Then the lorry drove off towards Luxembourg.

Back in his quarters Punzel shook all over as if with a chill. Now

## THE PRISONERS OF DIFFERDANGE

the thing he had done seemed incredible. He was sure to be found out. Perhaps his own men would report him—though several of them had congratulated him. In any case the firing squad would soon come and he would be done for.

But Punzel was lucky. Within an hour a general order came through: the 330th was to move up to the Maginot Line. In the commotion that followed, nobody thought of enquiring about the firemen of Differdange. . . . Nobody ever did.

PUNZEL never disobeyed another order; he ended the war as a second-lieutenant. He went back to Pressig, to the dreary business of trying to make a living for himself and his family in a beaten and despairing country. He had another go at the family delicatessen shop. It failed. He had jobs, but they didn't last long.

In 1946 he was notified that he was under investigation by a Military Government court because of his former Party membership. After some thought he wrote to the Management of Mines in Differdange, telling them who he was and what he had done in the matter of the firemen. He never had an answer. But later he was notified by the court that he had been cleared.

THE FLEEING firemen found refuge with their families or friends and went into hiding. After the fall of France in 1940 it seemed safe to return to Differdange. Some of the men went back to their old jobs in the steelworks, now under German management.

There was much speculation as to who had sent the signals to the French. The truth was never established.

Joseph Weiler died of a heart attack. So did Mrs. Wallers. Young Nic Kremer rose in the world, went into politics after the war and was elected to the Luxembourg Parliament. He was the one who concerned himself with finding Johann Punzel. But in the disorganization of defeated Germany, it proved impossible to trace a soldier through his name and serial number.

Then Kremer heard of the letter Punzel had written to the

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Management of Mines. Kremer wrote to the Military Government, stating the facts of the case, but had no reply—though his letter later proved to have been helpful in getting the charge against Punzel dropped. But when he tried to trace Punzel through the Military Government he got nowhere.

After many unsuccessful attempts over a period of years, Kremer tried writing to the police of various German cities. In the spring of 1955 the Nuremberg police sent him Punzel's address in Pressig.

Kremer wrote to Punzel, inviting him to visit Differdange for a reunion with his former prisoners. Punzel, touched and incredulous at this surprising turn of events, replied that he would come.

Punzel and his wife arrived at Differdange on 3rd June 1955, the fifteenth anniversary of the prisoners' release. The surviving firemen had contributed to an entertainment fund, and so had the management of the steelworks.

For three weeks the Punzels lived in a happy daze. At a big party, the first of many, a vast amount of food was set forth, toasts were drunk and a gold watch inscribed "ALS DANK FÜR HILFE 3.6.1940" (In Grateful Recognition of Help 3.6.1940) was presented amid thunderous applause. There were motor trips, more gifts, and invitations everywhere for lunch and dinner.

Punzel was received by the Luxembourg Minister of Justice, who thanked him in the name of the government for what he had done. One Sunday there was a special service in the principal church of Differdange. The pastor—who had spent three years in a concentration camp—preached a sermon of gratitude to Punzel, and the choir sang a hymn in his honour. Punzel broke down and wept.

Back at home, Punzel obtained a job with a publishing firm. Perhaps his visit to Luxembourg gave him the psychological boost he needed. At any rate, he hasn't needed to avail himself of the offer made by Luxembourg's Minister of Justice: "If things don't work out for you," he said, "come back here and we'll get you a good job."

## Miracle at Dunkirk

*By Arthur Divine*

THERE WAS FROM first to last a queer medieval sense of miracle about the Dunkirk affair. You remember the old quotation about the miracle that crushed the Spanish Armada, "God sent a wind." This time "God withheld the wind." Had we had one on-shore breeze of any strength at all in the first days, we would have lost 100,000 men.

The pier at Dunkirk was the unceasing target of bombs and shell-fire throughout, yet it was never hit. Two hundred and fifty thousand men embarked from that pier. Had it been blasted. . . .

The whole thing from first to last was covered with that same strange feeling of something supernatural. We muddled, we quarrelled, everybody swore and was bad-tempered and made the wildest accusations of inefficiency and worse in high places. Boats were badly handled and broke down, arrangements went wrong.

And yet out of all that mess we beat the experts, we defied the law and the prophets, and where the Government and the Board of Admiralty had hoped to bring away 30,000 men, we brought away 335,000. If that was not a miracle, there are no miracles left.

WHEN I HEARD small boats of all sorts were to be used at Dunkirk, I volunteered at once, having no vast opinion of the navy as small-boat handlers. I had been playing with the navy off and on ever since the beginning of the year, mine-sweeping and submarine



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hunting, convoying and so on. So friends of mine at the Admiralty passed me through without formalities, and within two hours of my first telephone call I was on my way to Sheerness. From Sheerness I acted as navigator for a party of small boats round to Ramsgate, and at Ramsgate we started the real work. The evacuation went on for something over a week, but to me the most exciting time was the night before the last.

I was given a motor-boat about as long as my drawing-room at home, thirty feet. She had one cabin forward and the rest was open, but she had twin engines and was fairly fast. For crew we had one sub-lieutenant, one stoker and one gunner. For armament we had two Bren guns—one my own particular favourite which I had stolen—and some rifles. In command of our boat we had a real live Admiral.

We first went out to French fishing boats gathered off Ramsgate, boats from Caen and Le Havre, bright little vessels with lovely names—*Ciel de France*, *Ave Maria Gratia Plena*, *Jeanne Antoine*. They had helped at Calais and Boulogne and in the preceding days at Dunkirk, and the men were very tired, but when we passed them new orders they set out again for Dunkirk.

They went as the leaders of the procession, for they were slow. With them went a handful of Dutch *schouts*, stumpy little coasting vessels commandeered at the collapse of Holland, each flying the white ensign of the Royal Navy, sparkling new, and each fitted with a Lewis gun. Next went coasters, colliers, paddle steamers that in time of peace had taken holiday-makers round the harbour for a shilling a time, tugs towing mud scows with fine brave names like *Gallions Reach* and *Queen's Channel*.

There was a car ferry, surely on its first trip in the open sea. There were yachts; one the *Skylark*—what a name for such a mission! There were dockyard tugs, towing barges. There were sloops, mine-sweepers, trawlers, destroyers. There were Thames fire floats, Belgian drifters, lifeboats from all round the coast, lifeboats from sunken ships. I saw the boats of the old *Dunbar Castle*, sunk eight

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months before. Rolling and pitching in a cloud of spray were open speedboats, wholly unsuited for the Channel chop.

There was the old *Brighton Belle* that carried holiday crowds in the days before the Boer War. She swept mines in the Great War, and she swept mines in this war through all the fury of last winter. I know; I sailed with her then. Coming back from her second trip to Dunkirk, she struck the wreck of a ship sunk by a magnetic mine and slowly sank. Her captain, a Conservative Party agent in civil life, got 400 men safely off and at the last even saved his dog.

There was never such a fleet went to war before, I think. As I went round the western arm of the harbour near sunset, passing out orders, it brought my heart into my throat to watch them leave. They were so small! Little boats like those you see in the bight of Sandy Hook fishing on a fine afternoon. Some were frowzy, with old car tyres for fenders, and some of them were bright with paint and chromium—little white boats that were soon lost to view across the ruffled water. And as they went there came round from the foreland a line of fishing boats—shrimp catchers and what not, from the east coast—to join the parade.

When this armada of oddments was under way, we followed with the faster boats—Royal Air Force rescue launches, picket boats and the like—and with us went an X-lighter, a flatboat, paraffin-powered, built for landing troops at Gallipoli and a veteran of *that* evacuation more than twenty years ago.

It was the queerest, most nondescript flotilla that ever was, and it was manned by every kind of Englishman, never more than two men, often only one, to each small boat. They were bankers and dentists, taxi drivers and yachtsmen, dockers, boys, engineers, fishermen and civil servants. There were bright-faced sea scouts and old men whose skins looked fiery red against their white hair. Many were poor; they had no coats, but made do with old jerseys and sweaters. They wore cracked rubber boots. They were wet, chilled to the bone, hungry; they were unarmed and unprotected, and they sailed towards the pillars

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of smoke and fire and the thunder of the guns, into waters already slick with the oil of sunken boats, knowing perfectly well the special kind of hell ahead. Still, they went, plugging gamely along.

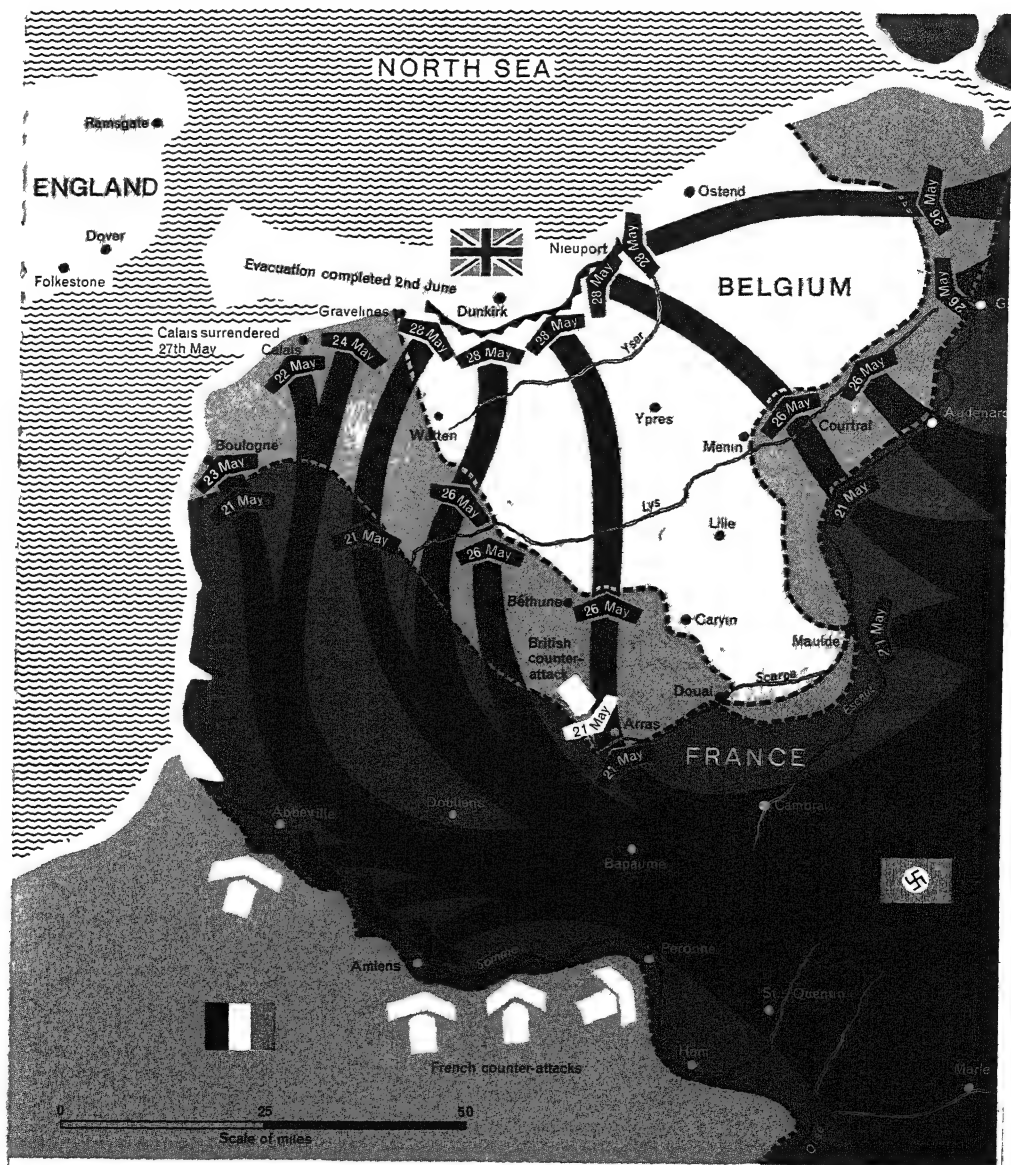
I had a feeling, then and after, that this was something bigger than organization, something bigger than the mere requisitioning of boats. In a sense it was the naval spirit that has always been the foundation of Britain's greatness, flowering again and flowering superbly. I believe 848 was the official figure for the total of boats that took part over the ten days of the evacuation. But I think there were more than a thousand craft in all. I myself know of fishermen who never registered, waited for no orders, but, all unofficial, went and brought back soldiers. Quietly, like that.

It was dark before we were well clear of the English coast. It wasn't rough, but there was a little chop on, sufficient to make it very wet and we were soon soaked to the skin. Soon, in the dark, the big boats began to overtake us. We were in a sort of dark traffic lane full of strange ghosts and weird, unaccountable waves from the wake of the larger vessels. When destroyers went by, travelling at top speed, the wash was a serious matter to us little fellows. We could only spin the wheel to try to head into the waves, hang on, and hope for the best.

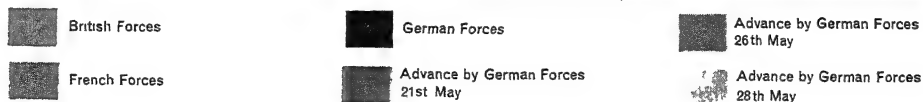
Mere navigation was dangerous in the dark. Clouds hung low and blotted out the stars. We carried no lights, we had no signals, no means of recognition of friend or foe. Before we were half-way across we began to meet the first of the returning stream. We dodged white, glimmering bow waves of vessels that had passed astern, only to fall into the way of half-seen shapes ahead. There were shouts in the darkness, but only occasionally the indignant stutter of a horn. We went "by guess and by God."

From the half-way mark, too, there were destroyers on patrol crossing our line of passage, weaving a fantastic warp of foam through the web of our progress. There were collisions, of course. Dover for days afterwards was full of destroyers with bows stove in, coasting vessels with great gashes amidships, ships battered,

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The German sweep to the Channel, 1940



## MIRACLE AT DUNKIRK

scraped and scarred. The miracle is that there were not ten for every one that happened.

Even before it was fully dark we had picked up the glow of the Dunkirk flames, and now as we drew nearer the sailing got better, for we could steer by them and see silhouetted the shapes of other ships, of boats coming home already loaded, and of low dark shadows that might be the enemy motor torpedo boats.

Then aircraft started dropping parachute flares. We saw them hanging all about us in the night, like young moons. The sound of the firing and the bombing was with us always, growing steadily louder as we got nearer and nearer. The flames grew, too. From a glow they rose up to enormous plumes of fire that roared high into the everlasting pall of smoke. As we approached Dunkirk there was an air attack on the destroyers and for a little the night was brilliant with bursting bombs and the fountain sprays of tracer bullets.

The beach, black with men and illuminated by the fires, seemed a perfect target, but no doubt the thick clouds of smoke were a useful screen.

When we got to the neighbourhood of the mole there was a lull. The aircraft had dispersed and apparently had done no damage, for there was nothing sinking. They had been there before, however, and the place was a shambles of old wrecks, British and French, and all kinds of odds and ends. The breakwaters and lighthouse were magnificently silhouetted against the flames of burning oil tanks—enormous flames that licked high above the town. Farther in-shore and to the east of the docks the town itself was burning furiously, but down near the beach where we were going there was no sign of fire and we could see row upon row of houses standing silent and apparently empty.

We had just got to the eastward of the pier when shelling started up. There was one battery down between La Panne and Nieuport that our people simply could not find and its shooting was uncannily accurate. Our place was in the corner of the beach at the mole and as they were shelling the mole, the firing was right over

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our heads. Nothing, however, came close to us in the first spell.

The picture will always remain sharp-etched in my memory—the lines of men wearily and sleepily staggering across the beach from the dunes to the shallows, falling into little boats; great columns of men thrust out into the water among bomb and shell splashes. The foremost ranks were shoulder deep, moving forward under the command of young subalterns, themselves with their heads just above the little waves that rode in to the sand. As the front ranks were dragged aboard the boats, the rear ranks moved up, from ankle deep to knee deep, from knee deep to waist deep, until they, too, came to shoulder depth and their turn.

Some of the big boats pushed in until they were almost aground, taking appalling risks with the falling tide. The men thankfully scrambled up the sides on rope nets, or climbed the hundreds of ladders, made God knows where out of new, raw wood and hurried aboard the ships in England.

The little boats that ferried from the beach to the big ships in deep water listed drunkenly with the weight of men. The big ships slowly took on lists of their own with the enormous numbers crowded aboard. And always down the dunes and across the beach came new hordes of men, new columns, new lines.

On the beach was the skeleton of a destroyer, bombed and burnt. At the water's edge were ambulances, abandoned when their last load had been discharged.

There was always the red background, the red of Dunkirk burning. There was no water to check the fires and there were no men to be spared to fight them. Red, too, were the shell bursts, the flash of guns, the fountains of tracer bullets.

The din was infernal. The batteries shelled ceaselessly and brilliantly. To the whistle of shells overhead was added the scream of falling bombs. Even the sky was full of noise—anti-aircraft shells, machine-gun fire, the snarl of falling planes, the angry hornet noise of dive bombers. One could not speak normally at any time against the roar of it and the noise of our own engines. We all developed



Above: Long lines of men wait on the beaches of Dunkirk for evacuation



Left: A sitting target for German dive-bombers, the men on the beaches despairingly pit their rifles against the Stukas

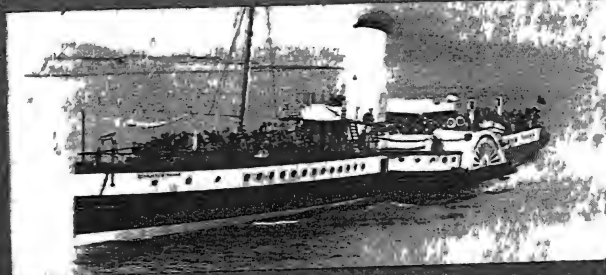


Right: After their gallant mission, the small craft of the nondescript navy are towed back to their Thames moorings

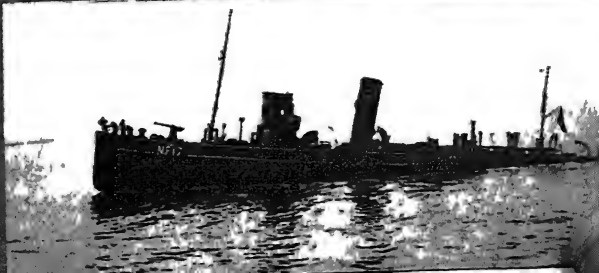
Left: A survivor has only pyjama trousers and a blanket to wear, but he and his colleagues have safely reached Dover



the queues of men (arrowed) shorten as the historic armada shuttles across the Channel



After forty years of holiday cruising, the Brighton Belle was sunk (below) returning from Dunkirk





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"Dunkirk throat," a sore hoarseness that was the hallmark of those who had been there.

Yet through all the noise I will always remember the voices of the young subalterns as they sent their men aboard, and I will remember, too, the astonishing discipline of the men. They had fought through three weeks of retreat, always falling back, often without orders, often without support. Transport had failed. They had gone sleepless. They had been without food and water. Yet they kept ranks as they came down the beaches, and they obeyed commands.

Veterans of Gallipoli and of Mons agreed this was the hottest spot they had ever been in, yet morale held. I was told stories of French troops that rushed the boats at first so that stern measures had to be taken, but I saw nothing like that. The Frenchmen I brought off were of the rear guard, fine soldiers, still fighting fit.

Having the Admiral on board, we were not actually working the beaches but were in control of operations. We moved about as necessary, and after we had spent some time putting small boats in touch with their towing boats, the battery off Nieuport way began to drop shells on us. It seemed pure spite. The nearest salvo was about twenty yards astern, which was close enough.

We stayed there until everybody else had been sent back, and then went pottering about looking for stragglers. While we were doing that, a salvo of shells got one of our troopships alongside the mole. She was hit clean in the boilers and exploded in one terrific crash. There were then, I suppose, about 1,000 Frenchmen on the mole. We had seen them crowding along its narrow crest, outlined against the flames. They had gone out under shellfire to board the boat, and now they had to go back again, still being shelled. It was quite the most tragic thing I have ever seen in my life. We could do nothing with our little park dinghy.

While they were still filing back to the beach and the dawn was breaking with uncomfortable brilliance, we found one of our stragglers—a navy whaler. We told her people to come aboard, but they said that there was a motor-boat aground and they would have to

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fetch off her crew. They went in, and we waited. It was my longest wait, ever. For various reasons they were terribly slow. When they found the captain of the motor-boat, they stood and argued with him and he wouldn't come off anyway. Damned plucky chap. He and his men lay quiet until the tide floated them later in the day. Then they made a dash for it, and got away.

We waited for them until the sun was up before we got clear of the mole. By then, the fighting was heavy in-shore, on the outskirts of the town, and actually in some of the streets.

Going home, the dive bombers came over us five times, but somehow left us alone though three times they took up an attacking position. A little down the coast, towards Gravelines, we picked up a boatload of Frenchmen rowing off. We took them aboard. They were very much bothered as to where our "ship" was, said quite flatly that it was impossible to go to England in a thing like ours. Too, too horribly dangerous!

One of the rare touches of comedy at Dunkirk was the fear of the sea among French *poilus* from inland towns. They were desperately afraid to forfeit solid land for the unknown perils of a little boat. When, on the last nights of the evacuation, the little boats got to the mole many refused to jump in, despite the hell of exploding shells and bombs behind them. I saw young sub-lieutenants grab *poilus* by the collar and the seat of the trousers and rush them over the side into waiting launches.

There was comedy of a sort, too, in the misadventures of the boats. The yachting season hadn't begun and most of the pleasure boats had been at their winter moorings when the call came; their engines had not been serviced and they broke down in the most awkward places. The water supply at Dunkirk had been bombed out of use in the first days, and the navy ferried water across to keep the troops alive. Some of the water went in proper water cans, but most of it was put into two-gallon petrol tins. *Of course* some of these tins got into the petrol dumps, with lamentable results. I ran out of fuel myself in the angle between Dunkirk mole and the beach, with

## MIRACLE AT DUNKIRK

heavy shelling going on and an Admiral on board. He never even said "damn." But we were lucky. A *schout* with spare fuel was lying a mile or so from the beach, near a buoy. I got to her with my last drop of reserve.

Then, for grim humour, there is the tale of the young sub-lieutenant, no more than a boy, whom I saw from time to time on one side of the Channel or the other. He was sent in the early days of the show to the beach east of Gravelines, where he was told there was a pocket of British troops cut off. He landed at the beach with only a revolver and walked off into the sand dunes to hunt for them. In the darkness he suddenly saw two faint shapes moving and called out, "Here we are boys, come to take you off."

There was silence, and then a guttural, "*Lieber Gott!*"

"So," the boy told me, "I shot them and came away."

He had walked right into the German Army.

One of the greatest surprises of the whole operation was the failure of the German E-boats—motor torpedo boats. We crossed by a path that was well lit by light buoys, spread the whole way across from the Goodwin Sands to the Dunkirk Roads. Well-handled E-boats could have got among us in the darkness and played havoc—either in the Channel or in Dunkirk Roads.

I had stopped once off one of the light buoys when a division of destroyers passed me. They could see me only as a small dark shape on the water, if at all, and had I had torpedoes I could have picked off the leaders. I might have been a German motor-boat, and if the German navy had any real fighting spirit I ought to have been a German motor-boat. They did send a few boats in, and I believe they claimed one of our destroyers somewhere off La Panne, but they never pressed the attack home with any vigour, never came in force against our motley armada off the beaches. The German Navy lost a great chance.

Germany, in fact, failed in three ways at Dunkirk. Against a routed army she failed on land to drive home her advantage, though she had strategic and numerical superiority. She failed in the

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air, though with half a million men narrowed into one small semi-circle, she should have been able—if air power ever could be decisive—to secure decisive victory. And at sea, her motor-boats were so lamentably handled that we almost disregarded them. For long hours on end we were sheep for the slaughtering, but we got back to Ramsgate safely each time. There we watched the debarkations, two and three hundred men from each of the larger boats marching in an endless brown stream down the narrow curve of the east harbour wall. Among each load would be five or six wounded. The hospital ships went in to Dover; at Ramsgate we saw mainly the pitiful survivors of ships bombed on the way over—men with their skin flayed by oil burns, torn by bomb splinters or wounded by machine-gun fire from the air. Most of them were still unbandaged and almost untended. They were put ashore just as they had been pulled from the water, the most pitiful wrecks of men. Yet they were surprisingly few.

Well, that's the story of Dunkirk, as I saw it. We were to learn in the weeks that followed that the Straits of Dover are the best tank trap the world has ever devised.



## Hero When He Had to Be

*By Edwin Muller*

THAT NIGHT in 1941 as Max Manus climbed the stairs to his flat, he had no premonition that the police would be there waiting for him.

Of course he was never entirely free from the feeling that they would get him one day. The Norwegian Resistance Movement was still new, but Max had few illusions about his chances. Either there would be a knock on his door in the middle of the night or, as he walked through the streets of Oslo, he would hear the curt command: "Halt! Your papers."

As he opened his door and went into the dark hall, they jumped on him before he had time to turn on the light. There were six of them: Norwegian *statspolititi*.

They took away the gun in the holster under his armpit and the other one strapped to his leg. Then they tore the rucksack off his back. In it were papers that held damning evidence. What could he do? He had grenades hidden in the bathroom. They let him in there, but two of them went with him, keeping close. No chance to get the grenades.

Back in the room the leader was going through the papers. Max measured the distance to the window with his eye. Then, glancing towards the door, he gave a fake start of surprise. Six pairs of eyes turned and in that instant Max dived through the blackout paper and the glass pane and crashed on to the pavement two floors below.

He came to in the hospital. As he struggled into consciousness he heard a voice saying: "But it would be stupid to take this man to be shot. He will die here—and soon. His back is broken."

Max drifted into unconsciousness.

When he came to again a nurse was there, and a doctor too. The doctor bent down and whispered: "You are not going to die. Your back is not broken—only two vertebrae loose. Before long you will be able to move."

Day and night the *statpoliti* kept two guards posted outside the door and the doctor told Max that he was having trouble in convincing the police that he was too ill to be moved. "They say they'll not wait much longer to try you."

Soon Max was able to get out of bed. Cautiously he practised taking a few steps.

The window of his room was boarded up because of air raids. But at the top was a hinged section. Max calculated that if he could climb up there he might just squeeze through. When the nurse came in to attend to his dressings he gave her a name and an address and long whispered instructions.

Next day when the nurse entered she was walking with a stiff leg. She had brought a short fishing rod, with reel and line. She told Max the escape was set for that night, at 3 a.m.

From midnight onward Max kept looking impatiently at his watch. Finally it was 2.50. He got out of bed, took the fishing rod out of the cupboard, attached the lead sinker to the line and let it down through the window. It was then 2.55. At exactly 3 a.m. he felt a tug on the line.

So far, so good.

Max reeled in the line. Attached to its end was a rope, which he tied to the bed. Then he scrambled up and squeezed through the window opening.

It was snowing and as he slid down the rope an icy wind tore open his hospital shirt and struck his bare back like a whiplash. His friends caught him, hurried him to a car and wrapped him in warm

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blankets. As they drove through the dark streets they heard the scream of the police cars arriving at the hospital.

THE *statspoliti* never caught Max Manus again. He lived to become the most renowned hero of the Norwegian Resistance.

This slight man, with sandy hair and gentle, blue eyes, almost single-handed sank ships, blew up munition factories, terrorized the Nazi invaders. He became a hero but never, in the long years of German occupation, did fear leave him for a moment.

After his escape from the hospital Max was ordered to London for a course in advanced sabotage. That journey took him seven months. From Norway, dodging the frontier guards, he went on skis across the snowy passes into Sweden, thence by train to Odessa, then to Istanbul, where he had a narrow escape from Nazi agents. (By then he was a marked man.) He went on to Suez, down the Red Sea, round the Cape and across the Atlantic to America and so eventually to Britain.

In London Max's course in sabotage included the use of "limpets," flat tin cases of high explosive, to be attached by magnets to a ship's hull below the water-line.

He was dropped by parachute in the snow-covered mountains of Norway and made his way on foot to Oslo. Fear hung over the city like a fog. The secret police, Germans and Norwegian Quislings, were everywhere. People walked about the streets in silence, afraid to talk openly to their best friends. But Max made contact with the Resistance and soon he was back at the stealthy, dangerous work of the saboteur. On orders from the Resistance leaders in Britain, several factories working for the Nazis were destroyed: an aircraft factory, acid factories, an oil reserve plant, a ball-bearing factory, a locomotive works and even the administration building of the Norwegian Railways.

In most of these operations Max took a leading part.

Perhaps the most dangerous and exciting task was the destruction of the German troopship *Monte Rosa*.

The *Monte Rosa* ferried troops between Oslo and Germany. The Resistance men were given the job of destroying her.

The area round the dock where the *Monte Rosa* tied up was enclosed by a high barbed wire fence. There was always a guard at the gate; other guards were on the dock. When the ship was docked precautions were intensified. Hitler himself could hardly have got through the gate. Searchlights played all night on the water round the ship.

But a water-front worker suggested that under the dock were cross-beams broad enough for a man to lie on. Two men might get down there before the ship arrived from Germany, stay on the beams during the two or three days she was in port and fix explosives to her side. The charges would be timed to explode at sea.

It looked like a good plan. The only flaw was that it might cost two lives. But the Resistance decided that the *Monte Rosa* was worth the loss of those lives. Max and his friend Gregers Gram were given the job.

Dressed in worn overalls, Max and Gregers drove a delivery van up to the water-front gate. In the van were two big workmen's chests. Hidden under the tools were twelve limpet bombs.

Max explained to the guard that they had come to repair cables under the dock. They produced the proper permits. The guard examined the papers, then went to the back of the van. He opened the boxes and started to turn over the tools. Just then another van drove up fast. The driver blew the horn and shouted: "Hurry up, can't you?" The guard waved Max and Gregers on and turned angrily to deal with the second van, whose driver was a fellow member of the Resistance.

Max and Gregers deposited the two boxes in a blind passage that was never used, and drove away.

Next morning they were back on foot. They nodded casually to the guard, showed their permits and went in. Now to get the boxes under the dock—on which a German sentry stood guard.

While the sentry watched, they hauled the boxes towards a





When Crown Prince (now King) Olaf returned to Norway in 1945, Max Manus (right) was his bodyguard on the triumphal drive through Oslo

ladder that led underneath. When they got to within two feet of the ladder the sentry challenged: "What are you doing here?"

"We are to repair the cables under the dock. These things are heavy. Won't you give us a hand with them?"

The guard looked at Gregers, then at Max. Then he reached down and helped them to lift the boxes.

Under the dock they were in darkness. The beams and concrete foundations were cold and slimy to the touch. Below was the oily water in which floated garbage and refuse.

They had to get the boxes across to the other side of the dock where the *Monte Rosa* was expected to berth. It was like creeping into a cave. The timbers overhead were so low that they had to crawl on their stomachs. Nails protruding from above ripped their clothing. Then—the beams ended. It was only a gap; the beams resumed farther on. But it was impossible to swim the gap with fifty-pound chests.

For a long time they lay there on the beam. Then a thought occurred to Max. In one of their hide-outs in Oslo was a rubber boat, the kind that aircraft carry. They crawled back and scrambled up the ladder. At the gate they grinned sheepishly at the guard.

"We forgot some tools." The guard let them out.

There was a bad moment when they came back with the boat folded in the bottom of a tool kit. Would the guard inspect it? By now, however, they were a familiar sight and he waved them through. Some time later, with their boxes, they were lying on the beams on the side of the dock where the ship was expected.

They were down there for three days.

The first day was bearable. They had sandwiches and a bottle of brandy. It helped them to endure the stench. Rats scurried and squealed round them, and at night the creatures came closer. They smelt the sandwiches. Their eyes gleamed in the dark. They seemed as big as cats. Max and Gregers spent the night taking turns in fighting them off.

On the second day they heard noise and shouting overhead; then they heard a ship's whistle. Presently a great hull slid silently alongside the dock.

The *Monte Rosa* was in port for two days. Max and Gregers waited until the last moment. They waited almost too long. Working from the rubber boat, they fixed the last limpet just as the hull began to move. The suction drew the frail boat alongside and seemed about to pull it under. Max and Gregers caught hold of a beam and managed to drag themselves free. Then they cut holes in the little boat and sank it.

It was a bad moment when they climbed the ladder and thrust their heads above the dock. But fortunately no guard was looking. They scrambled out.

A few days later the news came from Britain: the *Monte Rosa* had exploded at the dock in Copenhagen. The ship was out of commission for months. Later on, with another companion, Max repeated the *Monte Rosa* exploit on her sister ship, the *Donau*.

## HERO WHEN HE HAD TO BE

The war ended before the Nazis could even the score with Max Manus. He was lucky, but he was also very careful. He didn't take any unnecessary chances. His friend Gregers Gram was not so careful. He let himself be ambushed in an Oslo café one night. Five Nazis came at him. Gregers reached for a grenade, but they shot him before he could throw it.

On 8th May 1945, the German forces in Norway capitulated, and soon afterwards, on a fine spring day, Max Manus drove down the main thoroughfare of Oslo, the Karl Johan, in an open car with King Haakon and Crown Princess Märtha, and the whole city was in a turmoil of celebration.

Since that day, Max Manus has tried to forget the years that went before. He found them too frightening. Not being the hero type, he likes it when things are normal. And he'd fight to keep them so.

*Condensed from The American Weekly*

## **Giraud's Brilliant Escape from a Nazi Prison**

*By Frederick Painton*

ON 10TH MAY 1940, German infantry flowed out of the woods near Le Catelet, France, and surrounded a French machine-gun nest. After the emplacement had been pulverized by mortar fire, the German officer called on the survivors to surrender. To his amazement, among them appeared a six-foot, grey-moustached man with the five stars of a general on his *képi*. For the second time in twenty-five years Henri Honoré Giraud was a German prisoner of war.

It was a bitter humiliation for a man whose career had just reached its peak. Giraud had been an outstanding officer ever since 1898, when he had a brilliant record at St. Cyr military school. But ill luck followed him into battle. In the First World War, Giraud, then a captain, was wounded while leading a zouave bayonet charge at Charleroi and left for dead on the field. The Germans captured him and placed him in a prison camp in Belgium. Even before his wounds healed he managed to escape. He pretended to be a Belgian, and joined a travelling circus. When the show reached Brussels, Nurse Cavell got him into Holland. From there he made his way to Britain. Although permanently lamed by his wounds, he finally rejoined his regiment in France.

During the peace years he served with distinction in Africa and as governor of Metz. He also taught at the École de la Guerre, where one of his students was a Captain Charles de Gaulle. When the

## GIRAUD'S BRILLIANT ESCAPE FROM A NAZI PRISON

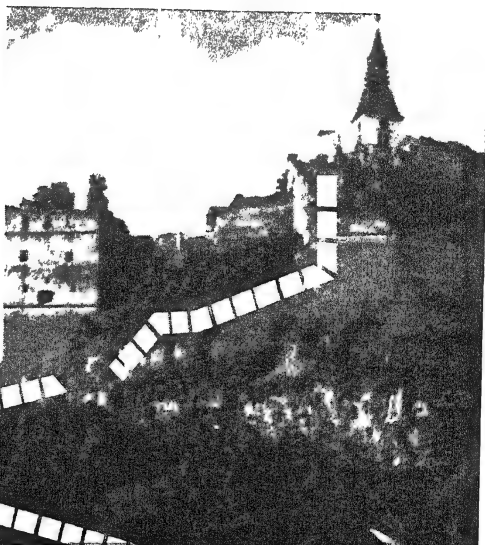
Second World War came, he was made commander-in-chief of the Allied forces before Laon. At the news that the Germans had broken out of the Ardennes forest he rushed to the front to see how the tide might be stemmed. Thus, while on reconnaissance, he had been caught in a forward machine-gun nest.

Giraud had escaped before, yes. But now he was sixty-one. It needed youth to escape. Nevertheless he refused to give his word not to make the attempt. He was taken to the fortress of Konigstein, on a sheer cliff 150 feet high, with all entrances double-guarded and a sentry walk where guards passed every ten minutes.

Immediately Giraud began to scheme for escape. He practised his German until he could speak it without an accent. He obtained a map of the surrounding country, and memorized every contour. With the twine from parcels sent to him he patiently wove a rope that would support his fourteen stone. When it proved not strong enough, friends in France sent him 150 feet of copper wire in an adroitly prepared ham. He was allowed, of course, to write letters; his jailers did not know that an invalid prisoner, who had been repatriated, had conveyed a code to the General's wife. Using this, in the form of seemingly innocent letters, he sent out details of his plan bit by bit. This took all the rest of 1940-1.

He had only a French general's undress blue uniform to wear, but his raincoat could pass for a civilian garment. Presently, among the parcels arriving for him was another luscious ham. Had the Germans opened it, they would have found a gay Tyrolean hat.

On the morning of 17th April 1942, Henri Giraud stood on the balcony looking out over the sentry walk. Tied to his waist was a package containing chocolate, biscuits, the Tyrolean hat and the raincoat. When the guard had passed, the General knotted his home-made rope to the balustrade, and started his 150-foot descent. He wore gloves, but even so the skin was chafed from his hands. He had put his wedding ring in his watch pocket; the rope burnt through the cloth, and it was lost in the rocks below. His old wounds gave him agonizing pain, but he reached the ground safely.



At the age of 63, General Giraud escaped from the German fortress of Königstein clambering down a home-made rope that he had hung over the 150-ft. cliff outside his

He limped to the cover of some trees, shaved off his moustache, and put on the Tyrolean hat and the raincoat. Two hours later he reached a bridge at Schandau, five miles away. Calmly he leaned against the parapet and ate the lunch from his pack. There at one o'clock exactly according to plan, a lean young man carrying a suitcase and a hat in the same hand strolled towards Giraud. This was the pre-arranged signal. The young man had been sent by friends.

Giraud and the young man went to the railway station, boarded the first train that came along, and went into a lavatory. There Giraud opened the suit-case and found his own Paris clothes. There were also identity papers bearing the name of an industrialist and a photograph that looked like him—without his moustache—and money. A few minutes later a distinguished-looking businessman left the lavatory.

Now Giraud put into operation part two of his escape plan. The alarm was out, the frontier guards alert. He could hope to avoid

## GIRAUD'S BRILLIANT ESCAPE FROM A NAZI PRISON

arrest only by travelling continuously on trains until the uproar died away. So now began a week-long *Hegira* by rail through Germany.

Once near Stuttgart, Gestapo agents began working through the train, verifying heights against the passengers' identity cards. Giraud's height could not be disguised. But he happened to be seated opposite a young *Oberleutnant* of the Afrika Korps. He smiled at the lieutenant and remarked that he, too, had spent much time in Africa. The German was delighted to find someone who knew the desert. They conversed animatedly.

By the time the Gestapo man arrived at Giraud's seat he was illustrating graphically with his hands his idea of how Rommel could beat the British. The German lieutenant watched, his own eyes eager, his hands poised.

The Gestapo man touched Giraud's shoulder. "Your papers, please, gentlemen." The lieutenant, boiling to present his own point, looked up angrily. "Go away! How dare you interrupt us?" He went into a tirade. The man did exactly as Giraud had guessed he would: apologized and backed away.

On another occasion, as the general was about to board a train, he saw Gestapo agents searching every passenger. He dallied outside until the train began to move. Then Giraud, with a supreme effort of will, ran—without limping. His glasses jiggled. His cheeks puffed out. He had all the appearance of a flustered German businessman trying to catch a train. He yelled something about how vital it was for him to catch this train, and his very boldness carried the affair off. One of the Gestapo agents actually helped the panting old gentleman aboard.

Finally he crossed the border into occupied France. He hoped to slip over the line into the unoccupied area, but found that German guards were stopping every man over five feet eleven tall. Back he went by train across south-eastern Germany to the Swiss frontier. That, too, seemed tightly closed. But there were mountain trails that could not all be watched. One night he struck out over an unfrequented trail. Climbing among craggy peaks he came upon

## GIRAUD'S BRILLIANT ESCAPE FROM A NAZI PRISON

three young soldiers. Their bayoneted rifles swung to cover him.

Then a soldier spoke—in a Swiss dialect. He was safe. The guards took him into Basle, where he made his identity known. The Germans were furious, but the Swiss refused to surrender him.

Giraud finally made the dash for unoccupied France. He resorted to an old trick—that of changing cars several times on the lonely Swiss roads. The cars entered unoccupied France by different roads. The Gestapo stopped the wrong car.

In 1914 when he had first escaped from the Germans, Giraud had sent his wife a telegram when he reached Holland safely. It had read: "Business concluded excellent health affectionately Henri." Now he sent her another: "Business concluded excellent health affectionately Henri."

Yet General Henri Giraud was not a free man. When Marshal Pétain refused the German demand to return Giraud, the Nazis tried to assassinate him and he was forced to go into hiding.

History, however, was to summon Henri Giraud from obscurity. On 24th October 1942, in an Arab farm-house in Algeria, Lieutenant-General Mark Clark conferred secretly with pro-Ally French officers about the possible Allied occupation of French North Africa.\*

During the conference the French officers raised the point of choosing a leader round whom the many French factions could rally. General Mast said, "There is but one man—General Giraud."

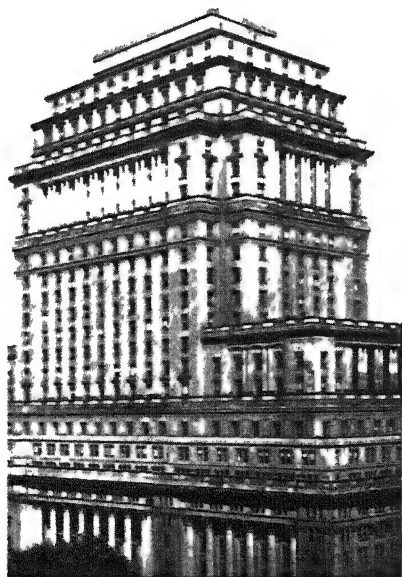
General Clark objected. "But the general is practically a prisoner in unoccupied France."

"He must be got out—by submarine."

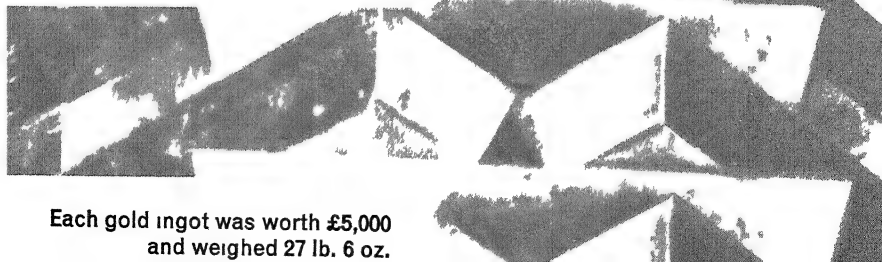
Such was the daring plan, put into effect a few nights later when a submarine reached the southern coast of France. The British secret service had informed Giraud, and he was ready. He arrived in North Africa in time to command the French army which fought so magnificently with the Allies in Tunisia.

\* See "Secret Mission to North Africa," p. 232





Treasure worth £1,800 million, representing most of Britain's liquid assets, was stored in the subterranean vaults of Montreal's Sun Life Building



Each gold ingot was worth £5,000 and weighed 27 lb. 6 oz.

## How Britain's Wealth Went West

*By Leland Stowe*

AT 5 p.m. on 2nd July 1940, seventeen days after Paris fell to the Nazi blitz, a special train pulled into Bonaventure station, Montreal, Quebec. Waiting to meet the train were David Mansur, Acting Secretary of the Bank of Canada, and Sidney Perkins, of the Foreign Exchange Control Board. Both men knew that the train carried secret cargo under the code name of "fish," but only Mansur knew that they were about to walk into the biggest financial gamble ever made by any nation in peace or war.

As soon as the train stopped, armed guards stepped down and surrounded it. Mansur and Perkins were led through the guards into one of the coaches. There they met Alexander Craig of the Bank of England; with him were three assistants.

"Hope you won't mind our dropping in unexpectedly like this," smiled Craig. "But we've brought along quite a large shipment of 'fish.'" The slight, spectacled bank official paused, and then nonchalantly added, "Actually, the 'fish' are a very large portion of the liquid assets of Great Britain. We're cleaning out our vaults—in case of invasion, you know. The rest will be coming over shortly."

Sidney Perkins's startled mind began translating "liquid assets" and "rest of the stuff." It could mean only that the Bank of Canada was about to take over virtually everything Britain possessed which could be turned into dollars. Quite a tidy bundle of "fish!" Just how tidy a bundle, he was soon to learn.

## HOW BRITAIN'S WEALTH WENT WEST

TWO WEEKS earlier, when the fall of France threatened Great Britain with imminent invasion, Winston Churchill had called the Cabinet into secret session and had decided to transport over £1,800 millions-worth of securities and gold to Canada.

The shipments would first have to get through the submarine-infested North Atlantic, but once safely in Canada they would be used to pay for the war goods Britain desperately needed. (This was before Lend-Lease, and Britain could buy from the United States only on a cash-and-carry basis.) Upon the outcome of the secret "Battle for Bullion" that now began lay the ability of Britain to stand alone.

The decision held even greater import. It meant that Churchill's government was secretly determined to do far more than "fight on the beaches." If a German invasion should succeed, the British would carry on the war from Canada. The transfer of the treasure was thus part of a two-stage, last-ditch survival plan.

The prime need was for *secrecy*. Any leak to the Nazis would not only endanger the shipments but would also greatly affect the country's morale. The nation's fighting spirit was still superb. Any indication that the government recognized the possibility of a successful invasion might well undermine the will to resist. So the Battle for Bullion was fought under cover, completely screened from public knowledge, without a single official communiqué.

A farsighted move at the outset of the war made the whole gamble possible: all British citizens in the United Kingdom had been required to register with the Treasury all the foreign securities they owned. This was part of the treasure which Churchill and his Cabinet now decided to commandeer. Never before had the investments of a nation's private citizens been pre-empted for national defence without securing consent from the owners. But in June 1940, when Paris was threatened, the government moved.

"In ten days," says a participant, "all selected securities in the banks in the United Kingdom were scooped up, packed in thousands of boxes, and delivered to regional collecting centres."

## HOW BRITAIN'S WEALTH WENT WEST

Here were all the vast profits brought to Britain by generations of world-traders and investors. Together with tons of Britain's accumulated gold, they would now be sent across the sea. In that month of June, fifty-seven Allied and neutral ships totalling 349,177 tons had been sunk in the North Atlantic alone.

THE CRUISER HMS *Emerald*, commanded by Captain Francis Cyril Flynn, was selected to carry the first secret shipment. She would sail from Greenock on 24th June. On Sunday, 23rd June, four of the Bank of England's "gilt-edged" specialists, with Alexander Craig as chief, entrained for Glasgow with only a suitcase apiece. Meanwhile, heavily guarded secret trains rushed final deliveries of gold and securities to the cruiser at Greenock. Late that night the destroyer *Cossack*—at thirty knots and heavy risk—sped through thick fog to join the treasure ship's escort.

By six p.m. on the 24th the *Emerald* was crammed with a load of treasure such as no one ship had ever carried before. Her magazines were heaped high with 2,229 heavy bullion boxes, each containing four bars of gold. (The tons of gold were so heavy that they bent the angle irons beneath the magazines' floors.)

Elsewhere were stored 488 boxes of securities the value of which, conservatively estimated, was more than £100 million. More than £130 million in one shipment was about to be committed to the hazards of war in the North Atlantic.

"We left the Clyde that night with reports of bad weather ahead," recalled Captain Flynn, a sturdy, ruddy-faced man with unflinching grey-blue eyes. "The reports were correct. The seas whipped up as we rounded the north coast of Ireland next morning. When we turned out into the Atlantic we were punching into a heavy sea and a rising gale."

The ship's paymaster, encountering Alexander Craig on deck, remarked: "The Old Man's just had a signal from the Admiralty. There's a couple of German subs waiting for us." Then the paymaster sauntered nonchalantly away, leaving the Bank of England's

mathematical expert to compute the odds against their safe arrival.

The odds grew longer as the weather grew worse. The gale cut down the speed of the escorting destroyers. Finally Captain Vian, in command of the escort, signalled to Captain Flynn that he would hold a straight course while the *Emerald* zigzagged behind the destroyers. That way the *Emerald* could maintain a higher, and safer, speed.

But the ocean got rougher and rougher. It cut the destroyers' pace so severely that Captain Flynn decided to travel alone. "We found it wiser," he says, "for the escorts to turn back. I put *Emerald's* speed up to twenty-two knots. Those first three days the going was such that many of our crew became seasick." But on the fourth day the weather cleared, and shortly after 5 a.m. on 1st July the Nova Scotia coast showed dimly ahead. Now, in a calm sea, the *Emerald* churned straight for Halifax at twenty-eight knots. By 7.35 a.m. the treasure ship was safely docked.

Waiting at the quayside was a special train with a dozen luggage coaches. On hand were officials of the Bank of Canada and the Canadian National Express. The quays were screened off under extreme precautionary measures; every box was checked off the *Emerald* and rechecked into the coaches.

At 7 p.m. the gold train rolled away. At Montreal the security-bearing coaches were cut off; the gold cargo sped on to Ottawa.

This was the train which David Mansur and Sidney Perkins met in Montreal. Now the treasure was tossed into their laps. Where could the hundreds of crates of securities be safely hidden? David Mansur had found the answer.

The Sun Life Assurance Company's twenty-four-story granite building, occupying an entire block in Montreal, was the largest commercial building in the Commonwealth. It had three subterranean levels: the lowest of these was to be the wartime home of what was now christened "The United Kingdom Security Deposit."

The big move started that night as soon as Montreal's streets grew quiet and free of traffic. Shortly after 1 a.m. city police isolated

the few streets between the railway yards and the Sun Life building and the bullion vans began to move. Accompanied by armed, plain-clothes Canadian National Express guards, they shuttled steadily through the streets and down Sun Life's rear entry ramp. Once inside, Royal Canadian Mounted Police hovered hawk-like as the boxes were lowered to the "Buttress-Room" in the third basement. With the last shunted into place—and checked—Deposit Manager Craig, for the Bank of England, handed David Mansur a receipt to sign for the Bank of Canada.

But a few days later the Deposit's assets barely escaped an unscheduled liquidation. A terrific thunderstorm deluged Montreal, causing a very heavy seepage through the Buttress-Room's side walls. Fortunately the security crates had been piled on heavy planks, laid on struts two feet off the floor. When discovered at about 4 p.m. the inrushing water was lapping the planks: emergency pumps were started just in time to save millions in securities from being reduced to indecipherable paper pulp.

Construction of a burglarproof vault was now begun. But a vault sixty feet square and eleven feet high required a lot of steel. Where could it be got in wartime? Fortunately, someone thought of an unused, forgotten railway. Two miles of its tracks provided 870 rails which went into the vault's three-foot-thick cement walls and ceiling. Also into the ceiling went dozens of microphonic sound-detection devices, so supersensitive that they would record even the sliding click of a filing-cabinet drawer.

To open the vault door, two different combinations were required. Two bank officials were given one combination; two more were given the other. "I never knew what the other combination was from first to last," says one. "To open the vault we had to pair up every day."

Three dozen similar trainloads of securities arrived in the next three months. To store the certificates, nearly 900 four-drawer filing cabinets were needed. Twenty-four Canadian Mounties guarded the treasure day and night, eating and sleeping in the building.

## HOW BRITAIN'S WEALTH WENT WEST

THE *Emerald's* epic voyage was merely the first dash in the historic transatlantic race. On 8th July, five ships left British ports with the greatest combined load of treasure ever transported by land or sea. Out of the Clyde at midnight slipped the battleship *Revenge* and the cruiser *Bonaventure* to make a rendezvous in the North Channel off Scotland with three former liners: the *Monarch of Bermuda*, the *Sobieski* and the *Batory*\* (the latter two being Free Polish ships). Four destroyers served as escorts.

Under the command of Admiral Sir Ernest Archer, this convoy carried approximately £192 millions-worth of gold bullion, plus 299 boxes of securities which Sir Ernest had reason to evaluate at "about £250 million"—or a total value of about £442 million.

"We had the usual Admiralty reports of submarines active in the vicinity," Admiral Archer recalls. (In the two previous weeks twenty-eight Allied ships totalling 139,000 tons had been destroyed by the enemy.) "We managed to dodge their U-boats. Whenever we knew they were near we'd do a few jinks. Enemy raiders were also active, but none put in an appearance. Were we nervous? We knew what was on board. You took the ships and did your best."

After some 200 miles the escorts left the treasure ships on their own. But with Admiral Archer "doing what he could" incomparably well, the convoy pushed and dodged steadily westward. It didn't seem quite so simple to his important passengers: Sir Otto Niemeyer, then a Director of the Bank of England, and his fiscal experts. One reports: "It was absolutely marvellous how those ships kept station. They went at high speed, yet each kept its fixed position several hundred yards from the others as they twisted and turned in evasive action. With no lights at night they moved closer together, but there was never even a near-collision."

As to Admiral Archer—"An incredible man," said his executive officer, Commander H. L. Jenkins. "Nothing worried him. Even

\*After the war, the *Batory* was handed over to Communist Poland and began a chequered peacetime career. More than fifty people have jumped ship and sought political asylum when it has docked in Britain and Denmark. In 1953 the captain, Jan Cwiklinski, fled when the *Batory* was berthed in South Shields.

when lifeboats were torn off by the waves, he just plugged on."

Three-quarters of the way across, an engine defect slowed down the *Batory*. To avoid risking the rest of his ships the Admiral diverted her to St. John, with the *Bonaventure* to see her in. As the others dashed for Halifax these two ships ran into grave trouble.

"We hit a most frightful fog, with floating ice at the same time," said Vice-Admiral (then Captain) Jack Egerton, who was in command of *Bonaventure*. "For nearly twelve hours it stopped us dead. I had to stick close to the *Batory* in the fog. Between us we carried some £60 million in bullion—and you couldn't see an iceberg until it was practically on top of you." Somehow Captain Egerton kept contact with the *Batory* and chaperoned her into St. John—then steamed full speed for Halifax.

All across the Atlantic the *Revenge's* eight fifteen-inch and twelve six-inch guns, plus her four-inch anti-aircraft batteries, were ready for action. "The gun crews were always at their stations," says Commander Jenkins. "At night they slept beside their guns. Damage-control parties kept a constant watch for leaks or fire."

On 13th July the three ships slipped safely into Halifax harbour, shortly followed by the *Bonaventure*, then the *Batory*. In Admiral Archer's words, "The arrival was a relief."

WITH THE precious cargo safe from enemy submarines, there was a slight tendency to relax the tension. As unloading of the *Revenge* got under way, a gold ingot from a broken box plunged through the hatchway to the fourth deck below. A sailor, peering down, called: "Is that gold all right?" An angry sailor shouted up: "What about our bloody heads?"

Another mishap sprinkled quarts of gold sovereigns down the hatch. Jenkins dispatched midshipmen to retrieve them. When re-weighed the coins scaled exactly right.

Sidney Perkins was on hand for their arrival, as he was for most of the others. When Perkins saw the manifests' figures for the five ships he could scarcely believe his eyes. "Seeing tens of



millions in gold piled on the quay gave me a cold chill," he admits. "Even with the whole area fenced off, some word about this enormous shipment could easily leak out in a big port like Halifax.

"I was happy to see the last box off the *Revenge*. But checking the manifests I found we were three cases short. Jenkins made sailors comb the ship from stem to stern for half an hour—without results. Completely baffled, we paused in the ward-room's bar. 'Haven't you got a list showing where each box was stored?' I asked.

" 'We were in a bit of a rush, loading in the Clyde,' Jenkins drawled. 'At any moment a Junkers 88 could have dropped a *bon voyage* present down our stacks.'

"The mess steward, preparing our drinks, suddenly got the point of the conversation. 'Perhaps I've got what you're looking for, sir,' he suggested. 'There's something down here I've been tripping over since we left the Clyde.' The three boxes of Britain's 'liquid assets' had been stored, appropriately, beneath several cases of Scotch whisky."

Five special trains were needed to carry the convoy's bullion from Halifax to Ottawa. The gold was so heavy that only 150 to 200 boxes could be laid on the floor of each coach. Each train had ten to fourteen loaded luggage coaches; a diner and two sleeping cars were added for about fifty railway and Canadian National Express guards. Two guards, on four-hour shifts, were locked with the bullion inside each coach.

All these gold shipments travelled without insurance. Who could or would insure hundreds of millions of pounds in bullion, especially in wartime? But the *Revenge* convoy set a cost record of another kind. Transport charges of the Canadian National Express were the largest in its history—"over one million dollars."

In Ottawa the CNR juggled the arrivals of the specials so that the gold could be transported from the station at night to the Bank of Canada in Wellington Street. Who could imagine that this five-story structure, with scarcely a 140-foot frontage, was soon to be Fort Knox's only important rival anywhere in the world?

## HOW BRITAIN'S WEALTH WENT WEST

For three days the *Revenge* convoy's golden flood poured into the Bank's 60-by-100-foot vault. Unpacking was pushed feverishly. At last tens of thousands of twenty-seven pound ingots were neatly piled like huge cakes of yellow soap inside the wired cages: row after row, tier above tier, all solid gold, up to the ceiling.

Besides the bullion, the vault at one time held over 50,000 sacks of gold coins from many countries. There were millions of world-famous French "Napoleons," countless other coins stamped with the profiles of Louis XVI, Louis XV and Louis XIV. British gold sovereigns ranged from George V and Queen Victoria through George III's rare "spade guineas" to souvenirs of Elizabethan times. There were quantities of modern and old Dutch coins, great numbers of Maria Theresa gold thalers, thousands of Scandinavian and other European gold pieces.

MEANWHILE, in Montreal, just outside the crammed securities vault, a huge, high-ceilinged room had been equipped as the Deposit's office. Now, deep in that sub-cellar the strangest, most secret stock-and-share business in the world mushroomed. Mansur had recruited some 120 Canadians—retired bankers, brokers and investment-firm secretaries—as a staff. Taking oaths of secrecy, they began to unravel what some called "our bundles from Britain."

It was an incredibly exclusive office. Only one lift operated down to the third basement. Every employee had to present a pass (changed each month), first at the lift entrance and then to Mountie guards below, signing in and out daily. Beneath the guards' table concealed trip-hammer alarms connected directly with RCMP and Montreal police headquarters, and with the Dominion Electric Protection's service. Once a Mountie accidentally tripped his alarm. Within three minutes the place swarmed with trigger-ready police.

All summer, as other arrivals pushed the total of boxes of securities up to nearly 2,000, Craig's staff worked ten-hour days, six days a week. The securities were a gigantic hotchpotch of thousands of separately owned issues; all had to be unpacked,

checked and classified. In the end some 2,000 different stocks and shares were identified. Each individually owned parcel was tied (more than seventy miles of tape was required) and its contents double-checked. To correct discrepancies in cross-checked lists, more than 6,000 "query slips" were dispatched to London. All business was urgent, because none of these "negotiables" could be marketed until the lists, amounts and ownership were verified. "It looked, then," a member of the staff told me, "as if everything that would fetch a dollar must be marketed." By early autumn that process began.

"Craig had a whole squad of secretaries doing nothing but cutting coupons," says one Canadian. "I never saw so many coupons in my life. A great many owners hadn't touched their shares for a long time."

In his war memoirs Sir Winston Churchill says laconically that: "Up to November 1940, we had already sold 335 million dollars-worth of American shares, requisitioned for sterling from private owners in Britain."

After the Treasury's representative sold the securities the former owners were repaid at whatever the current market prices had been—but they were obliged to accept payment in sterling rather than dollars. In that way Britain obtained masses of additional dollars for war purchases.

By September, Deposit Manager Craig, who knew all along what he was *supposed* to have, knew at last that he *had* it: every certificate was accounted for and filed. "I don't believe we lost a single coupon," he said recently. "Not a certificate was missing. In view of the pressure under which they were assembled and shipped, it was quite extraordinary."

Equally extraordinary was the way the entire clandestine operation was successfully blacked-out. One day when war news was bad a Sun Life waitress, recently emigrated from Britain, remarked glumly to Perkins: "If the Germans take Southampton I hope they won't grab my two shares in Canadian Pacific." Perkins

## HOW BRITAIN'S WEALTH WENT WEST

suppressed a knowing grin. At that moment she was standing almost directly over the spot where her shares were safely stored.

The Deposit remained in Canada for the duration of the war, but its liquidating (market) operations in US securities ended with the enactment of Lend-Lease in March 1941. By then a substantial proportion of the negotiables had been sold. Thereafter the Deposit served merely as a place for safekeeping.

How much had all the securities been worth? Three highly-placed authorities, closely concerned, agree in independently estimating the Deposit's over-all value at approximately £1,250 million.

THE GOLD, as well as securities, kept on arriving. In the three months of June, July and August the Admiralty's records show that British ships (with a few Canadian and Polish) carried to Canada and the United States gold worth more than £637 million.

Most amazing fact of all: in those three months 134 Allied and neutral ships were sunk in the North Atlantic—but not one gold-carrying vessel went down.

According to an ancient practice, whenever a British warship successfully transported bullion its officers and crew were awarded a "bounty"—one tenth of one per cent of their gold cargo's value. Unluckily for the winners of Britain's battle for bullion, this long-established regulation was rescinded some time before the Second World War.

WINSTON CHURCHILL and his war Cabinet won their gigantic gamble. Not only did Britain's means to fight arrive safely in Canada—a treasure worth more than £1,800 million—but the whole vast operation was successfully kept tightly veiled in secrecy. At one time or another well over 600 people were involved in the Security Deposit's clandestine services. The gold deliveries involved thousands of ships' personnel and hundreds of dock-workers on both sides of the ocean. Perhaps never before have so many kept so great a secret so incredibly well.

## Shepherds of the Underground

*By George Kent*

FROM A goods train on a siding in eastern France, a woman worker of the French Red Cross heard a strange, muffled wailing, like the sound of a radio heard through a wall. She walked along the train, listening, and discovered to her horror that inside one of the wagons children were screaming. She called the station master and they managed to get the door open.

There were eighty Jewish children packed tight in that goods wagon, clinging to each other in terror. They had been put aboard by the Germans in Paris with two loaves of bread, a flagon of water and some cheese. They had been locked in for eighteen hours while the train made its halting progress towards the Reich. Four had already died. The presence of these dead companions, the darkness, the fear of the unknown future had made the children hysterical. Several of them were temporarily deranged.

The Germans had cut off their identification bracelets and most of them were too young to know their names. One little girl remembered brightly that she lived at number sixteen but could not remember the street.

Yet these children were lucky; they were smuggled into hiding. Most of the 15,000 Jewish children the Germans seized in France and packed off to Germany were not so fortunate. There is evidence that many were put to death in the gas chambers of Poland.

My story concerns the children the Nazis didn't get. There were

12,000 or more, from babies to gawky kids of sixteen. Of these 4,000 were smuggled across the Swiss and Spanish borders: 8,000 were kept alive and safe right under the Nazis' nose.

The leaders in the work were two Catholic priests and a Protestant minister—Fathers Chaillet and Duvaux, and the Rev. Paul Vergara. Father Chaillet was a nervous man with the pallor and tired eyes of a scholar who worked fourteen to sixteen hours daily. Father Duvaux was a figure out of the *Canterbury Tales*, an enormous rosy tub of a man with a full beard. Pastor Vergara, whose denomination resembled the Presbyterian, was small and gnome-like, with dishevelled grey hair and high cheek bones.

These three men perfected an interlocking organization throughout France, the sole purpose of which was to save Jewish children from the Nazis. Father Chaillet alone managed to find safety for more than 4,000. Duvaux tucked away 1,000. Vergara with the help of other Protestant ministers accounted for another 1,000. The rest were taken care of by ordinary people, inspired by love of children and hatred of the Germans.

A well-known doctor helped by taking Jewish children to his hospital and fitting them out with fake disease and fever charts. He also developed a chemical formula which washed the word Jew from the children's food cards—the red ink of the stamp had resisted all previous eradicators.

One committee of ten middle-aged women, five Protestant and five Catholic, managed to save 358 children at the risk of their own lives. One woman was captured and put to the torture of boiling hot baths alternated with icy cold ones. Scores of men and women were imprisoned; some were killed.

Father Chaillet, a Jesuit, was the outstanding figure in this labour of love. After the 1940 armistice, he started a militantly liberal weekly called *Témoignage Chrétien* (*The Christian Witness*), which attained considerable underground influence, especially among young men and women, who haunted his office.

Early in 1942, the Vichy government rounded up and shipped to

Germany several thousand Jews. In Lyons, where the priest lived, the deported men and women were forced to leave their children behind—120 in all. Father Chaillet started gathering up the youngsters. Four he found, half-starved and terror-stricken, living in a cellar. A dozen more were picked up in the street. Thirty he took from a barracks where the police had put them.

Methodically he set out to put the children beyond the reach of the Germans in such a way that they might be united with their families after the war. A former detective fingerprinted each child. Records of names, addresses and identification marks were drawn up in triplicate and secreted.

Then Father Chaillet sent his young helpers, usually girls of eighteen to twenty, into the country on their bicycles to talk to peasants. They discovered if the peasants were patriots, if they could be trusted with the care of orphans—and if they had a cow or a milk goat. In a radius of 100 miles round Lyons the girls secured havens for most of the children. Arrangements for the others were made with Catholic orphanages and schools. False papers had to be prepared for each child.

Older, matronly-looking women ran the greater risk of taking the children to the new homes. It was difficult rehearsing the little ones. One small girl, given a new name, wept, "How will Mama know me when she comes back?" A six-year-old boy of Dutch parents, who spoke French with a thick accent, was warned to keep utterly silent on the journey. The ride lasted four hours and the child did not open his mouth. But on arrival, his trousers were wet. "You told me not to speak," he explained pathetically.

Incorporated into the peasant families, the children mingled freely with the other youngsters of the locality, at school and at play. In these small communities the status of the new arrivals was no secret. But only half a dozen in all were betrayed.

A few months after Father Chaillet had hidden the children, the Germans set a quota of 200 Jews to be surrendered by Lyons and the Vichy police proposed to send the children as part of it. Father



Father Pierre Chaillet: when Nazi tyranny threatened the children of Europe, his underground organization went to their aid





Chaillet defied the authorities to find them and was sent to a concentration camp.

In prison he wrote an open letter to Catholics and Protestants which was smuggled out and sent to 10,000 priests and ministers. It appealed to all churches to join the fight against Hitler by helping the Jews. Much of the valiant part taken in the Resistance by the French clergy can be traced to the influence of this letter.

Released at the end of three months, Father Chaillet doffed his clerical dress and took his organization underground. *Témoignage Chrétien* as an organ of the Resistance achieved a circulation of more than 200,000. Father Chaillet was recognized as the spiritual leader of the Resistance and General de Gaulle appointed him chief of all the social services of the Underground.

His centre of operation was a humble room in a slum street in Grenoble. Here he planned many successful *coups* of the Resistance and worked out the complicated mechanism of hiding Jewish children. Once, trapped by the Gestapo, he hastily chewed and swallowed papers that might have incriminated him. Then he managed to talk his way out. As time went on he extended his activities until he was operating in every corner of France. His staff of several hundred workers ranged from small boys who served as messengers to five countesses who acted as escorts.

In July 1942 the Germans rounded up 13,000 adult Jews in Paris and herded them into the Vélodrome d'Hiver, the big sports arena. The screaming of the women, torn from their children, could be heard in near-by streets. Thousands witnessed the incident; it horrified the French and shocked them into activity. Neighbours picked up the children and tried to comfort them.

Father Duvaux, a Dominican, sent out nuns who brought back thirty of the children. At night he distributed them, in groups of three, among the homes of friends in Paris. There they stayed until places could be found for them outside the city. Then the nuns went back for more. Thus began the work of Father Duvaux.

For him, it was particularly dangerous. He had been famous in

## SHEPHERDS OF THE UNDERGROUND

Europe before the war as an opponent of anti-Semitism. The Nazis ransacked his house and carried off his books and papers. Gestapo men kept watch on his quarters for twenty-four hours a day.

Not all the children left behind after the July raid fell into friendly hands. The Gestapo found many of them and put them in camps, where they stayed in a sort of cold storage to await the next draft.

One day a Red Cross worker who visited such a place described the squalor to Pastor Paul Vergara. The little man went into a black rage. At the settlement house he had been running in a Paris slum, he brought together a dozen women, including his wife. They prepared an order in German, purporting to come from Gestapo headquarters, requiring the release of the children. It was a dangerous trick, but it succeeded.

Over the door of the settlement house, Pastor Vergara had painted the words of Louis Pasteur: "We do not ask of an unfortunate: What country do you come from or what is your religion? We say to him: You suffer, that is enough. You belong to us; we shall make you well." That night seventy ragged, frightened Jewish children shuffled across the threshold beneath the noble inscription. On the following day the pastor embarked on the enterprise of finding permanent homes for the children, co-operating with Fathers Chaillet and Duvaux.

Twice, later on, the Gestapo raided the settlement house. They killed Vergara's brother-in-law the first time. Warned of the second raid, the office staff escaped through a window and across adjoining roofs. But the Germans imprisoned and tortured Vergara's wife and son, and later deported the boy.

At one time there were reckoned to be 8,000 children hidden in France. When the war ended very few of their parents returned to claim them. And perhaps the only relief in the misery of the situation was the happiness of foster parents whose adopted youngsters then became their own.

*Condensed from Christian Herald*

## **The Frogman Who Crippled a Fleet**

*By J. D. Ratcliff*

MY DEAR MOTHER: *By the time you receive this letter I will be dead. I volunteered for a dangerous mission which failed . . . .*

This was the first of three letters written by Lieutenant Luigi Durand de la Penne of the Italian Navy two weeks before Christmas, 1941. A second announced success, a third that he was a prisoner of war. When the mission ended, the appropriate letter would be posted.

De la Penne, twenty-seven, a handsome, athletic six-footer, was about to embark on an undertaking that ranks high in the annals of courage: he was to be the leader of a six-man party in a barehanded attack on British naval power at Alexandria. Pitting twelve-stone men against 32,000-ton battleships, he was destined to win a signal naval victory and the admiration of its principal victim. Said Winston Churchill: "An extraordinary example of courage and ingenuity."

De la Penne's assignment was to sink main elements of British sea power in the Mediterranean at a critical moment in history. The British had just lost a battleship and an aircraft-carrier to submarines. The remaining two Mediterranean battleships had taken sanctuary in Alexandria harbour. De la Penne and his fellow volunteers were to ride midget submarines—called "pigs"—right into the harbour and attack the ships there.

Each "pig" was twenty-two feet long and twenty-one inches in

diameter. Propelled by silent electric motors, they had a speed of two to three m.p.h., a range of ten miles, a detachable warhead carrying 660 pounds of explosive. Once in the harbour, the teams were to attach explosive charges to hulls, then escape if possible.

The odds that any of them would return were slim. De la Penne and his men were advised to make wills and pack belongings for shipment home in case they didn't return. No officer of the group was supposed to be married. "But," de la Penne says, "I disliked the idea of dying without leaving a son behind." So he proposed to Valeria Butti, pretty daughter of a prominent Genoa family. After a secret ceremony de la Penne reported back for duty.

On 18th December the three teams were aboard the submarine *Scirè*, lying on the sea floor outside Alexandria harbour. Latest intelligence reports confirmed that the battleships HMS *Valiant* and HMS *Queen Elizabeth* were in the harbour. De la Penne and his crewman, Petty Officer Emilo Bianchi, were to take the *Valiant*, Lieutenant Antonio Marceglia and Spartaco Schergat, the *Queen Elizabeth*. Lieutenant Vincenzo Martellotta and Mario Marino were to attack a 16,000-ton fleet tanker, and then scatter floating incendiary bombs in the hope that oil from the tanker would set the entire harbour on fire. After completing their work, the teams were to swim ashore, steal a fishing boat and rendezvous on 24th December with an Italian submarine.

Shortly before 9 p.m. the crews struggled into their tight rubber suits. Their little craft moved slowly towards the harbour lighthouse. As they sat astride the pigs, only their heads protruded above water.

Time fuses were to be set. The tanker would go up at about 5.55 a.m., the *Valiant* at 6.05, the *Elizabeth* at 6.15. There was still time for the men to eat—possibly their last meal. From sealed canisters they extracted cold chicken, bread and small bottles of champagne.

Now the moment had come to move in closer to the steel net which guarded the harbour entrance. The pigs had pneumatic cutting shears, but they were noisy and nets were frequently festooned with explosive charges. While de la Penne hesitated,

pondering his next move, the lighthouse and the harbour suddenly lit up—ships were about to enter!

As the net parted, de la Penne said: "Let's go!" Three destroyers appeared out of the darkness. The three pigs followed, tossing wildly in the destroyers' wake.

Once inside, the frogmen set about spotting their targets. De la Penne approached the *Valiant*—and ran into a protective net. He and Bianchi tried to lift it. It was too heavy. There was only one solution: to try to roll themselves and their pig over the top without being discovered. To their relief, the manoeuvre was successful. They promptly submerged.

The best place for the charge was under No. 1 turret. To get a final check on position, de la Penne surfaced, unreeling a coil of cord which would guide him back to the pig. When he returned to the depths the pig refused to start. Suspecting that the cord had fouled the propeller, he turned to Bianchi to signal him to clear it. Bianchi was gone! De la Penne went to work alone.

The explosive warhead was still 100 feet out of position. Working with bare hands numb with cold, de la Penne started inching his 660-pound burden through the mud. After nearly an hour of back-breaking work the charge was in position, but de la Penne was too exhausted to attach it to the hull. However, since it was on the bottom only five feet under the ship, he felt sure it would work. The time was now 3 a.m.—three hours to go before the explosion.

Almost at the point of collapse, he surfaced—with a faint splash. It was enough to alert the deck watch on the *Valiant*. Instantly a searchlight pin-pointed him. There was a hail of bullets. Spotting an anchor buoy, de la Penne swam for its protection. Behind it was Bianchi. His breathing apparatus had failed, he had lost consciousness, bobbed to the surface, revived and swum to the buoy.

Soon a boat picked the two men up. At 3.30 a.m. they were questioned on the quarter-deck by the *Valiant's* executive officer. Beyond giving rank and serial number, both prisoners refused to divulge any information. They were separated, and de la Penne was



The *Valiant's* damaged hull after the Italian raiders struck

Luigi Durand de la Penne led the team of two-man submarines

The men wore frogmen's suits; each midget submarine had 660 lb. of explosive in its detachable warhead



imprisoned in a store-room on a lower deck of the *Valiant*—almost directly over the warhead. Braced by a glass of rum and a packet of cigarettes, he watched the minutes tick away—5.30, 5.40 . . .

There was a rumble in the distance. Martellotta's team had blown up the fleet tanker. Her entire stern was torn away, and a destroyer lying alongside was damaged, but the incendiaries failed to work. It was now 5.54—eleven minutes to go. De la Penne pounded on his cell door, asked to be taken to the ship's commander, Captain Charles Morgan. "Your ship will blow up in ten minutes," he said. "I have no desire to kill men unnecessarily. I suggest you get all hands on deck."

"Where is the charge placed?" Morgan asked. "If you refuse to answer, I must send you back below." De la Penne refused, for if Morgan knew that the charge was lying on the bottom, he could move the *Valiant* out of danger. As he was taken back to his cell, the ship's loudspeaker system ordered all hands on deck.

De la Penne kept his eyes glued to his watch. His life, quite likely, was ticking away. Had he set the fuse properly? Of course, it was impossible to set it to the exact second. At 6.06, the charge exploded. The *Valiant* shook convulsively and filled with smoke. De la Penne was hurled across his cell and knocked momentarily unconscious. When he revived, he saw that his cell door had been blown open. He made his way on deck unnoticed, fixed his eyes on the *Queen Elizabeth* near by. At 6.15 there was a terrific explosion. Marceglia had placed the charge directly under the *Queen Elizabeth's* engine room, and oil gushed from her stacks, showering the harbour and the *Valiant*. Since the anchorage was shallow, all three ships settled on the bottom remaining nearly upright.

At this moment the Italian Navy was supreme in the Mediterranean, and with the protection its cruisers could give, there should have been no insurmountable problems about supplying German and Italian troops in North Africa. But those cruisers never ventured out, and for an astonishing reason. Air reconnaissance pictures taken next day were correctly interpreted by Italian intelligence

## THE FROGMAN WHO CRIPPLED A FLEET

officers: *Valiant* was listing to port; *Queen Elizabeth* was down by the bows; both, clearly, were seriously damaged. But Mussolini overruled his experts. The ships, he decreed, were unharmed. Since his word could not be challenged, the Italian fleet remained in port, and missed its golden opportunity.

The British did everything possible to support Mussolini's folly. While frantic work was done on the jagged forty-foot holes in the two warships, calm reigned on the surface. Both ships kept up steam. Band concerts and receptions were held on deck. But it was more than a year before either was again ready for action.

Meanwhile, the six Italian frogmen had all been taken prisoner. De la Penne was sent to Cairo, thence to Palestine, where he escaped to Syria. He was caught and placed aboard an India-bound ship. In India, he escaped once more and was again picked up.

An occasional letter got through from his wife. One gossiped happily about the clever things "Renzo" had done. Renzo was the name of de la Penne's younger brother, and he wondered about his wife's sanity. He didn't know he had a year-old son of that name.

De la Penne was released shortly after Italy made peace with the Allies in 1943. He joined the Allied side, helped to thwart plans of retreating Germans to block the harbour at La Spezia. He and others slipped in and sank the ships there before they could be manoeuvred into the harbour entrance for scuttling.

One day in 1945 there was an extraordinary ceremony. Crown Prince Umberto of Italy was about to pin his nation's highest decoration, the Medaglia d'Oro, on de la Penne's chest. From those in attendance a man stepped forward—Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Morgan, British commander of naval forces in the area, former skipper of the *Valiant*. Thanks to de la Penne's warning, not a life had been lost among the *Valiant's* 1,700-man crew. Morgan turned to the Crown Prince. "May I have the privilege of pinning the decoration on this gallant gentleman?" he asked.

*Condensed from Life*



## **The Man Who Did Business with Himmler**

*By Edwin Muller*

EARLY in the war the name of Eric Erickson of Stockholm was put on the Allied black list. He was accused of trading with the enemy and aiding the German war effort. Allied Intelligence had reported that Erickson was dealing in German oil, making regular trips to Germany, and that he was on intimate terms with high-ranking Gestapo officials.

The disclosure was a stunning shock to Erickson's family. His old friends, all of whom were strongly pro-Ally, now crossed the street to avoid him. His wife was ostracized. But nothing stopped him.

"Red" Erickson was the aggressive salesman type, the sort whose career lies in making "contacts," in selling his genial self as well as his line of goods. He had gone into the oil business because it was exciting and took him to places. He spent years in the Orient and later in Europe, working for big international oil companies.

The "oil crowd" in the '20's and '30's was an international clan. You'd see a man in Shanghai one year, in London or Teheran the next. One year you might be competing ruthlessly with him, the next you'd both be on the same side of the fence. British, American, Dutch, German, they lived in an atmosphere of adventurous gambles and deals. Erickson was manager for the Texas Oil Company in Sweden. Then he started his own company to sell American oil products.

Soon after the war began, he saw an opportunity to do business with the Nazis. Germany then had oil to export, and it was absurd

to suppose that the Allies could ever affect the supply materially by bombing. So Erickson began to cultivate German businessmen. He joined the German Chamber of Commerce in Stockholm. He drew away from most of his old friends but kept on good terms with Prince Carl Bernadotte, nephew of the King of Sweden. The Prince, too, was playing with the Nazis—to most Swedes' disgust.

Erickson knew that Heinrich Himmler, chief of the Gestapo, would make the final decision on the oil deals. So the prospect on whom Erickson did his heavy work was Herr Finke, Himmler's chief representative in Sweden and a fanatical Nazi. Finke's weak point was a snobbish susceptibility to royalty. Prince Carl helped to make the contact and Erickson did the cultivating. Soon he was entertaining Herr Finke at his place in the country.

Other prospects, however, weren't so easy—notably Herr Ludwig, Commercial Attaché of the German Legation. He didn't like Erickson at all. But despite Ludwig's aloofness, Erickson got permission to visit Germany in the spring of 1941, with letters of introduction from Finke and others.

At Bromma Airport, outside Stockholm, the plane to Berlin was held up while Erickson was ordered off by the Swedish police. They thoroughly searched him and his luggage, but nothing incriminating was found, and he was allowed to proceed.

In Berlin, next morning, an official car took him to Gestapo headquarters. There he met two men who had been on the plane with him—Gestapo agents. They agreed that the incident at Bromma had been the work of Allied representatives.

Erickson made his contacts with German oil men, especially in Hamburg. He visited refineries there, talked with the managers, discussed the terms of the contracts he wanted. He also looked round for some of the oil crowd he used to know. First he found Captain von Wunsch, a Junker who had received part of his education in Britain, and had at one time been associated with Shell Oil. Since Erickson hoped to keep his deals secret, his talks with von Wunsch were very hush-hush. One day Erickson gave von Wunsch

a certain mysterious document which von Wunsch put in a tin box and buried in his back garden. Another contact was Herr von Stürker, an oil banker, of an old Hamburg family. Von Stürker also got a paper. Erickson made sure neither of them saw him with the other.

Soon after Erickson went back to Sweden, the first deliveries of German oil began. It was then that the Allies put him on the black list. His alienation from his old friends was complete. Some of them would get up and leave a restaurant if he came in. His Swedish wife suffered. She was anti-Nazi, yet she had to entertain these new friends.

In the months that followed, Erickson made other trips to Germany and continued to cultivate his friends in the Gestapo. He was invited to their homes, and would bring their wives butter and leather coats and other presents from Sweden. And he continued to make deals with other men like von Wunsch and von Stürker, though it became harder to get oil from Germany as the Allied bombings were stepped up. Once, after he had inspected a big refinery, the managing director asked him to stay to dinner. He hesitated but found it hard to decline. The meal was served in the director's office. It was nearly midnight when the party broke up and, just after, Allied bombers arrived. There wasn't any refinery left. The Allies almost put an end to Erickson's trading with the enemy.

The Allied attack on German oil was increasingly effective, yet in the latter part of 1944 a substantial portion of the industry was still functioning. Repairs were made rapidly and many refineries had been so well concealed that they were still untouched.

In the autumn of 1944 the Allied war effort was moving towards the climactic Battle of the Rhine. Erickson had to work fast if he wanted to make more deals. He had long wanted to make an inclusive tour of the German oil industry. Now was the time for it. He thought that it was one of those cases in which a salesman had to get to the man at the top—in this case Heinrich Himmler.

Erickson worked out a grandiose "big deal," the kind of thing any high-pressure salesman would love. He proposed to construct a huge synthetic oil refinery in Sweden, to cost more than

£1 million and financed by both Swedish and German capital.

This proposal was calculated to appeal to the Germans. It would put a source of oil for Germany in a neutral country, outside the reach of Allied bombers, and it was a way of planting Nazi funds in a neutral country if Germany should be defeated.

Erickson prepared a prospectus and took it to Finke, who was delighted. The Nazi bigwigs in Germany expressed keen interest. There was one dissident voice—that of Herr Ludwig. He maintained that Erickson was a phoney. Ludwig was a Foreign Office man, one of Ribbentrop's faction. More and more as the war went on that faction had come into collision with the Gestapo—in other words, with Heinrich Himmler. Himmler usually won. And so in this case Ludwig was overruled. Erickson was acceptable to the Gestapo, and the way was cleared for him to see Himmler.

IT WAS October 1944. Once more Erickson took the plane from Bromma Airport and flew over the grey waters of the Baltic and the dreary plains of northern Germany to Tempelhof Airport. He was given a suite at the best hotel in Berlin, and in the morning a big black car with its Gestapo guards called for him.

At Himmler's headquarters, the Gestapo chief greeted him cordially: "We have heard great things about you from Herr Finke." They talked at length of the refining plan, and of the need for Erickson to see, first hand, the operation of German plants. Then they went on to discuss other matters. "What would happen," Himmler asked suddenly, "if the Wehrmacht were to invade Sweden?"

"The Swedes would fight like hell," Erickson replied.

He reasoned that the way to impress Himmler was not to kowtow. He was right. The result of the interview was that he was given a unique document which certified that he should be allowed to go anywhere and see anything in the oil industry. He was given a car and a generous allotment of petrol.

Erickson covered Central Europe from Cologne to Prague. He inspected Leuna, Annendorf, Halle—all the big plants. He talked

## THE MAN WHO DID BUSINESS WITH HIMMLER

with managers, found out what they were doing and proposed to do. Like a salesman covering a new territory, he got the whole picture. And took it back to Sweden.

WHEN the war was over, the American Legation in Stockholm gave a big luncheon for "Red" Erickson. All his old friends were invited. And he was put right with his world.

It was told how a representative of Allied Intelligence had called on him soon after the beginning of the war. How Erickson had agreed to act as a spy but had refused any pay for his services. How at his own suggestion he was put on the black list. How Prince Carl Bernadotte, with whom he had worked, was also an agent for the Allies. How the oil delivered to him from Germany was turned over to the Allies and then used against the Germans. How he had had to give von Wunsch, von Stürker and his other contacts signed letters acknowledging their services as secret Allied collaborators, for use after Allied victory. How each such paper was another sword hanging over his head, so that he could hardly sleep in Germany, waiting for the knock that would mean the Gestapo.

His information—and that of others in his hazardous line of work—paid off. In those months before the Battle of the Rhine the offensive against German oil rose to its climax. When a new plant was completed Allied pilots had it on the map and could fly directly to it, no matter how well it was camouflaged. They knew the location of the fighter strips, the ack-ack batteries and the smoke-screen installations that defended it. After they had put a refinery out of commission they knew how long it would take to repair it. On the day it was due to resume production they would return.

The supply of fuel to the Wehrmacht and the Luftwaffe was cut to a trickle. When the last great assault began, fuelless German tanks stood helplessly, fuelless German planes were grounded.

The Allies made good Erickson's promises to von Wunsch, von Stürker and the others. Herr Ludwig, however, was imprisoned and given the time to reflect on his sound judgment of Erickson.




# The Hunting of the Bismarck

A condensation of the book, "The Bismarck Episode"

*By Captain Russell Grenfell, RN*

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On the evening of 23rd May 1941, one of the greatest battles in naval history began when the "unsinkable" German battleship *Bismarck* appeared out of the mist close to the Arctic ice pack. It took four days to sink her . . . four days in which Britain's sea-faring pride was to take a heavy blow and a German myth of invincibility was to be destroyed.

## **The Hunting of the Bismarck**

IN THE MIDDLE of May 1941, Britain's fortunes were low. For nearly a year she had been standing alone, in the face of the powerful and victorious Axis powers. At sea the situation was bad and getting worse. Sinkings had reached crisis proportions and the German Naval Command was attacking Britain's sea lanes not only with U-boats and aircraft but also with surface vessels. Now word came that two large German warships, heavily screened and accompanied by eleven merchant vessels, were steaming northward in the Kattegat. One of the warships was believed to be the powerful new battleship *Bismarck*.

The question immediately arose: what were the enemy warships going to do? Were they escorting the convoy as an incidental duty and planning afterwards to break into the Atlantic? Since an Atlantic break-out was the greatest menace, the British assumed that it would be attempted and based their plans accordingly.

This meant that all the exits from the North Sea by which the Germans might reach the Atlantic must be guarded, a necessity which created a vast complexity of search and chase problems. And such operations were notoriously expensive of ships.

Sir John Tovey, commanding the Home Fleet, had a force of two battleships (*King George V* and *Prince of Wales*), two battle cruisers (*Hood* and *Repulse*) and one aircraft-carrier (*Victorious*). These odds of five ships to one look satisfactory but the *Bismarck*

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was a tough problem. She was larger than any British battleship, and had a main armament of eight fifteen-inch guns, an inch larger than those of the latest British battleships, and was believed to be as fast as or faster than any British capital ship. Moreover, the Germans had demonstrated in the previous war their ability to build ships able to stand greater punishment than their British counterparts.

The British big ships by no means presented a similar high quality. The *Repulse* was twenty-five years old, had two guns less than *Bismarck*, was weakly armoured and of short fuel endurance. The *Hood*, although powerful, was over twenty years old while the *Prince of Wales* was too new. Two of her turrets had been installed just three weeks before, and there had not been time to "run in" the machinery. The *Victorious* was in much the same condition. She had just taken on her aircraft, the first time that the reservist pilots had ever landed on a carrier's deck. Thus Admiral Tovey (now Lord Tovey) had only the *King George V* that could be regarded as a fair match for the *Bismarck*.

The Admiral divided his heavy ships into two forces to cover the lanes into the Atlantic. The *Hood* and *Prince of Wales* would steam north; his own flagship the *King George V*, the *Victorious* and the *Repulse* would cover the passages to the Faroes to the south.

The question remained when to send these two squadrons out. Fuel supplies might play a decisive part in the success or failure of a chase which might well cover many hundreds of miles. If the British interceptor forces sailed too early and patrolled fruitlessly while the *Bismarck* was still in harbour, they would be that much short of fuel when she did emerge. On the other hand, if they delayed sailing too long, she might get out before them, with too long a start to be caught up. The only solution to this harrassing dilemma lay in accurate information of the enemy's movements.

AT 1.15 p.m. on 21st May a pilot searching the Norwegian coastline in a special Spitfire of the Coastal Command Photographic Reconnaissance Unit sighted and photographed two





The *Bismarck* in action against the *Hood*. (Photograph taken from the *Prinz Eugen*)



Vice-Admiral Guenther Luetjens, his flagship the *Bismarck*, was larger and faster than any British warship



Sir John Tovey, Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleet. He directed the action from the battleship *King George V*

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warships in a secluded fiord near Bergen. One of them was identified as the *Bismarck*, the other as a cruiser which was later discovered to be the *Prinz Eugen*.

At midnight that night, since the *Bismarck* was not again sighted, Admiral Tovey sent the *Hood* and her squadron on their way north. The following day, 22nd May, was one of bad flying weather and of suspense. But at 7.45 p.m., when he received an aerial-reconnaissance report that the *Bismarck* and her accompanying cruiser were no longer at Bergen, he prepared to take his own squadron to sea immediately. He also sent the cruiser *Suffolk* to reinforce the cruiser *Norfolk* which was already on patrol in Denmark Strait.

On the evening of 23rd May, at seven o'clock, Captain R. M. Ellis was standing on the bridge of the *Suffolk*. He had been on duty all that day and all the night before, and indeed the night before that. Continuing bad weather had prevented any assistance from aircraft in his patrol. Most of Denmark Strait was covered in fog and mist but there was a lane of clear water about three miles wide just below the edge of the Arctic ice pack. The *Suffolk* was steering south-westward in this lane, close to the mist. At 7.22 p.m. a look-out sighted the *Bismarck* and with her the cruiser *Prinz Eugen*. They were about 14,000 yards away, a dangerously close range to enemy guns that could shoot up to 40,000 yards. Captain Ellis put his wheel over on the instant to make for the fog, and sent out the enemy-report signal.

Keeping radar contact, he manoeuvred in the mist to allow the *Bismarck* to pass him so that he could shadow her. Scrutinizing the white dots on the radar screen which showed the two enemy ships, he saw them cross his course to the north, steaming fast. Captain Ellis then steered back into the open, saw the Germans fifteen miles ahead and set course to shadow them, sending out a string of wireless signals as he went.

Deep in the mist, the *Norfolk* took in those signals. The captain was at dinner in his cabin and was munching some Welsh rarebit

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when the chief yeoman of signals almost fell through the door with the excited announcement, "*Suffolk's* got 'em sir," and handed him the enemy report. Captain Phillips was on the compass platform in a moment to order the course altered to close to the enemy's reported position. At 8.30 p.m., after an hour's hard steaming, the *Norfolk* suddenly ran out of the mist and sighted the *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen* about six miles away, steaming towards her on the port bow. Captain Phillips put the wheel hard astarboard to get back into the mist and made smoke to cover his withdrawal. This time the *Bismarck* was on the alert and opened a very accurate fire. By immense good fortune the *Norfolk* was not hit. Some large splinters came aboard, but she got back into the mist without suffering any damage.

After the *Norfolk* had obtained sanctuary in the mist, she, like the *Suffolk*, manoeuvred to take a shadowing position well behind the enemy. She stationed herself on his port quarter, so that the German ships could not slip away by turning in that direction. Thus did the pursuit continue, chasers and chased rushing at nearly full speed through the icy waters of Denmark Strait in the half-light of the Arctic night, in and out of the fog banks, snow and rain squalls.

MEANWHILE, Vice-Admiral Holland's squadron of *Hood* and *Prince of Wales* with six destroyers had been steaming hard to cut the enemy off. At 5.35 a.m. on 24th May he sighted the two German ships and changed course to close with them. Officers and men, who had been at their battle stations since shortly after midnight, prepared to swing the big silent turrets into action.

In the *Norfolk* and *Suffolk* excitement mounted. Now that the big ships had arrived, the cruisers' object had been successfully achieved, and their tired officers and men prepared to watch with joyful and fascinated satisfaction the destruction of the enemy. Little did they realize what they were about to see.

From now on, things happened very quickly. When the range was down to 25,000 yards the *Hood* and the *Prince of Wales* opened

fire on the *Bismarck*. The *Bismarck* and the *Prinz Eugen* at once replied. Which ship was the enemy firing at? After a tense wait for the time of flight to pass, those in the *Prince of Wales* noted, not without relief, that both German ships were firing at the *Hood*.

The principal guide-posts in naval gun battles are the splashes made by shells hitting the water. These splashes leap up to a great height—in the case of large shells to about 200 feet—and are the means whereby gun control officers know where their shots are going, and whether they are “on” target. As a rule, the gun control officer will not see his hits. With delay-action fuses, a shell may penetrate deep into a ship’s hull before exploding, and the flash will be invisible from outside.

The *Prinz Eugen* scored the first hit in under a minute. A large fire broke out by the *Hood*’s mainmast, spread rapidly forward and blazed up high. To the watchers in the cruisers it appeared very like the top half of a setting sun, and they held their breath wondering whether it could be brought under control. Then it died down a bit and afterwards seemed to pulsate up and down.

The range meanwhile was decreasing rapidly and the *Bismarck* had several times just missed the *Hood*. Suddenly the horrified spectators saw a vast flame leap upward between the *Hood*’s masts to a height of many hundreds of feet; in the middle of it a great incandescent ball was seen soaring skyward. The volcanic upshoot of fire lasted but a second or two, and when it had disappeared the place where the *Hood* had been was covered by an enormous column of smoke. Through it, the bow and stern of the ship could just be discerned, each rising steeply up as the central part of the ship collapsed. The *Hood* had blown up in the middle, broken in half and in a couple of minutes completely disappeared.

THE *Prince of Wales* now came in for the full blast of the enemy’s ferocity. A towering wall of water leapt out of the sea close at hand, where a fifteen-inch salvo had landed. It was swiftly followed by the slightly smaller splashes of the *Bismarck*’s

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secondary-armament six-inch shells, salvoes of which, mingling with those of the *Prinz Eugen's* eight-inch, fell one on top of the other with whirlwind rapidity about every ten to fifteen seconds. The din was tremendous, the crash of the enemy's shells combining with the roaring of the *Prince of Wales's* guns and the hiss of falling spray from near-by shell splashes to make a continuous deluge of sound. So much water was being thrown up all round the *Prince of Wales*, some of it reaching up over the masthead, that it became none too easy to spot her own fall of shot.

Every now and then the ship was felt to shudder as something hit her, and those in the after control became aware of black smoke drifting past them from an obvious fire farther forward. In the midst of this turmoil a fifteen-inch shell came streaking on to the bridge, through which it smashed, exploding just as it emerged on the other side. The bridge instantly became a shambles, every officer and man killed or wounded excepting only Captain J. C. Leach himself and the chief yeoman of signals. In the plotting room just below, blood began to drip off the end of the bridge voicepipe on to the plot.

To make matters worse, the *Prince of Wales's* newness was now telling against her. Small mechanical breakdowns kept occurring in the turrets, now one gun and now another missing a salvo. The building firm's foremen of the turrets, who had been living aboard completing the final adjustment of the equipment, had come to sea with the ship. But even with their expert help in rectifying mishaps the average salvo was of about three guns instead of five.

The ship continued to take hits. Two shells pierced her side at the water-line and a number of compartments were flooded, about 500 tons of water getting in. Captain Leach, who by now had moved to the lower bridge, decided to break off the engagement and wait for reinforcements. He put his wheel over and retired from action behind a smoke screen.

The *Bismarck* made no attempt to follow, although she was showing no sign of damage. The only evidence which suggested

that she might have been hit was a conspicuous pillar of black smoke that shot up out of her funnel after about three minutes of battle. It was as if, shaken by some heavy jolt, all the soot had fallen out of the crevices and corners of her boiler-room uptakes and had been shot high in the air on the escaping funnel gases.

THE LOSS of the *Hood* was a heavy blow to the British. She had been the biggest warship in the fleet. A generation of naval men regarded her as the world's most powerful ship. And in her first battle she had disintegrated in a burst of flame after being under fire only a few minutes. Only three survivors were ever found.

The undoubted fact is that the *Hood's* design was defective. Indeed, a year or two after her launching, naval experts pointed out that an enemy shell approaching at a certain angle would have an easy passage into a magazine. This weakness could be remedied by extra armour plating, and the Admiralty decided to have this done when the next opportunity came for an extensive refit. But the job was never done.

It remains to be said that the *Bismarck's* shooting was brilliant, far better than the Royal Navy could then show. Her fire control was extremely good and her spread of salvoes very small indeed. Her achievement was remarkable. Faced by a two-to-one enemy superiority, in five or six salvoes she had blown up one ship and in another twelve or so had driven the other out of action.

The defeat of the *Hood's* detachment threw numerous plans into the melting pot. The brilliant flash of a huge explosion had changed the situation in an instant. If it had been necessary to sink the *Bismarck* before the catastrophe of the *Hood's* destruction, it was doubly necessary after it. Although the German battleship was later reported to be leaving a broad track of oil behind her, she was now continuing south-west at full steam, apparently unscathed; and there were at this time ten convoys at sea in the Atlantic, some of which had only a screen of light vessels for protection. This potentially disastrous situation spurred the Admiralty on to more drastic action.

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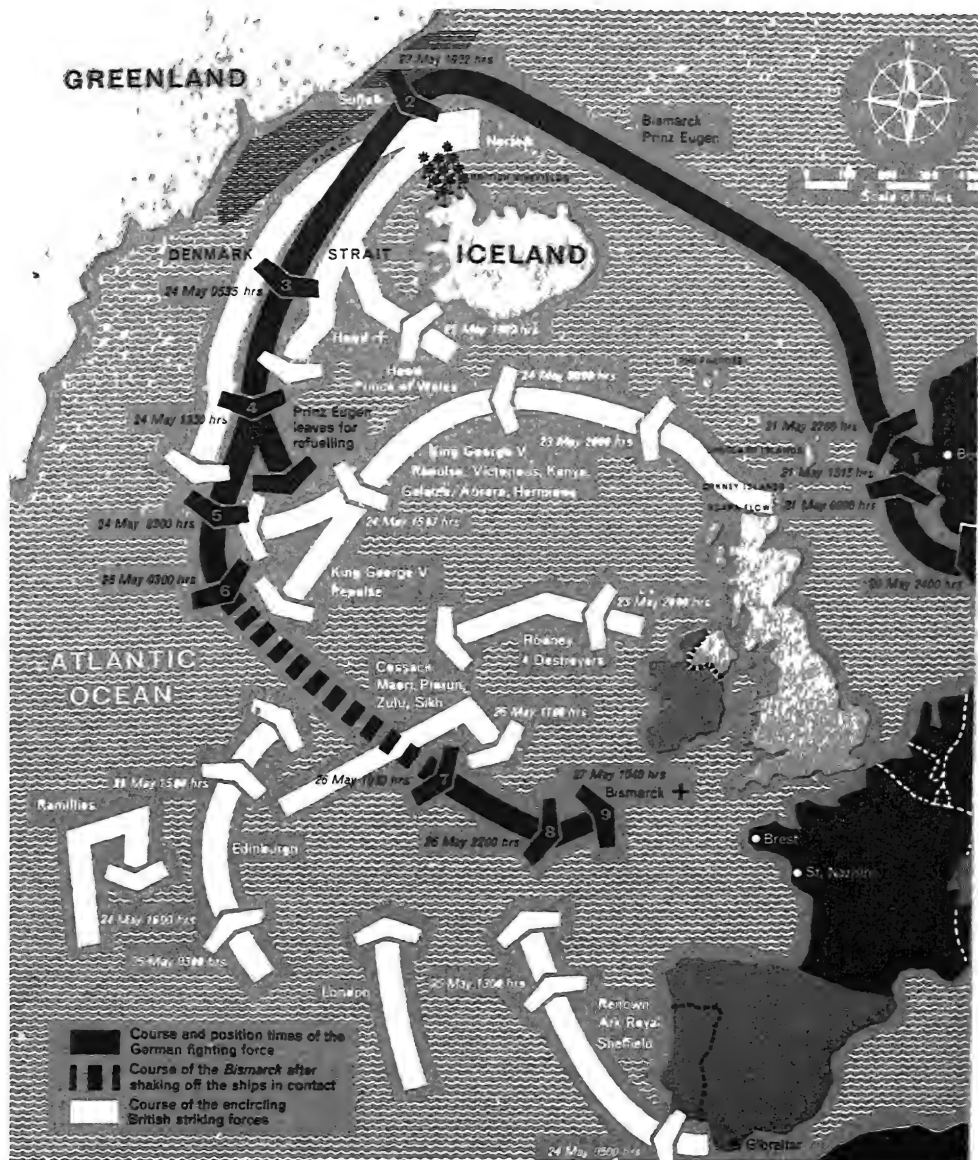
VICE-ADMIRAL Sir James Somerville's Force H, consisting of the battle cruiser *Renown*, the aircraft-carrier *Ark Royal*, the cruiser *Sheffield* and six destroyers, was at Gibraltar, 1,500 miles or so to the south. Its normal duty was to seal the western exit of the Mediterranean against the Italian fleet. Now it was decided to bring Force H in against the *Bismarck*. Hundreds of miles to the north-west in mid-Atlantic, the battleship *Ramillies* was ordered away from her convoy to close and intercept the enemy from the westward. About 500 miles from the Irish coast, the battleship *Rodney* was also detached from a convoy and ordered to intercept.

Within six hours of the *Hood's* destruction two additional battleships, one battle cruiser, one aircraft-carrier, three cruisers and nine destroyers had joined directly in the chase. A concentration was thus being arranged which for the vastness of the area involved and for its dramatic character had few, if any, rivals.

THE *Norfolk* and *Suffolk* had gone on shadowing after the *Hood* was sunk. The *Prince of Wales* was steaming near the *Norfolk*, and some 300 miles to the eastward Sir John Tovey on the *King George V* was pushing on towards the enemy at his squadron's best speed. With him were the aircraft-carrier *Victorious* and the *Repulse*.

For some hours the weather was clear and the cruisers kept the enemy ships in sight at fifteen to eighteen miles distance. About 11 a.m., however, banks of mist were sighted ahead. Both cruisers closed in as much as they dared, but about noon they lost sight of the enemy. Since the radar then in use had a range of only about thirteen miles, contact during the afternoon was intermittent.

Captain Ellis of the *Suffolk* had been expecting that the *Bismarck* might endeavour to turn on one or other of the shadowers under cover of low visibility and trap it at close range. Now at 6.30 p.m. his radar began to report the range as rapidly decreasing, and Captain Ellis, alert against an ambush, put his wheel over and increased to full speed. As his ship swung round, the *Bismarck* loomed out of the mist and opened fire with all her guns. Captain



### The Hunting of the *Bismarck*

- 1 An RAF Spitfire locates the *Bismarck* and the *Prinz Eugen* near Bergen
- 2 The *Suffolk* sights the German ships in the Denmark Strait
- 3 The *Hood* and the *Prince of Wales* engage the enemy; the *Hood* is sunk
- 4 Brief action, the *Bismarck* makes off at high speed
- 5 Torpedo attack on the *Bismarck* by aircraft from the *Victorious*
- 6 British ships lose contact with the enemy
- 7 Aircraft re-discovers the *Bismarck*
- 8 The *Ark Royal*'s aircraft attack
- 9 Final sea battle begins



Ellis ordered smoke to be made, and managed to hide behind it.

This brief action took both ships over towards the *Norfolk* and *Prince of Wales*. The latter opened fire in support of the *Suffolk*, and the *Bismarck* made away at high speed. It is now known that *Bismarck's* sally was made to cover the withdrawal of the *Prinz Eugen*, which was to make her way to an oiler for refuelling.

Thus far the British had managed to follow the *Bismarck's* course. But Sir John Tovey was worried lest she escape during the night. If she put on a sudden spurt she might give her shadowers the slip before they realized it. The only way to prevent this was to attack with the *Victorious's* aircraft. If they could only inflict some underwater damage on her, they might reduce her speed sufficiently to scotch any inconvenient spurts during the night.

Before dark, then, nine aircraft from the *Victorious* went after the *Bismarck*. This was the first occasion in history of a battleship at sea being attacked by carrier aircraft. The crews, most of them untrained for sea work, gallantly pressed home their attack. They dropped all their torpedoes, but only one was seen to take effect, and the *Bismarck* was not slowed up.

Altogether, the day was one of painful defeat and frustration. Moreover, at midnight the *King George V's* destroyers had to leave for Iceland. The long high-speed dash had depleted their fuel tanks too much for them to remain at sea. The *Repulse* also would soon have to leave for refuelling. It was all a grim reversal of fortune since the corresponding time the day before, when the *Bismarck's* career seemed as good as over.

But there was even worse to come, for at 3 a.m. on 25th May the shadow-cruiser *Suffolk* lost contact with the *Bismarck*. She was not resighted until thirty-one and a half hours later.

IT WAS a period of mounting tension, of desperate speculation as to the *Bismarck's* course, of worry over dwindling fuel supplies, above all of fear lest they were steaming away from the enemy instead of towards him.

Finally the *Bismarck* was spotted at 10.30 a.m. on 26th May, by aircraft of the Coastal Command. But meanwhile a long deviation towards the North Sea had cost the British much precious headway. From having been practically level with the enemy, they were now far behind him. And if he continued to make for France at a normal speed, it would be impossible to overtake him, for dwindling fuel supplies ruled out sustained hard steaming. Fuel expenditure rises very steeply as full speed is approached.

The *Bismarck* had a lead of about fifty miles over the *King George V* and moreover would soon be under German air cover. If she maintained her present speed of about twenty knots she could be within German bomber range by daylight the next day. Thus, if she were to be brought into action at all, her speed would have to be considerably reduced and the reduction must take place on this day, the 26th.

But how could this be done? Only by torpedoes. The only real hope lay in the *Ark Royal's* aircraft. Twenty-four hours or so earlier Force H had been 1,500 miles away. Now, pushing northward at full speed, this force might well be the only obstacle to the *Bismarck's* arrival in harbour.

When the wireless message came that the *Bismarck* had been found again, fifteen aircraft on the *Ark Royal* were prepared for the torpedo strike. At 2.30 a.m. the fly-off began. The *Bismarck* was forty miles away. The crews were told that no other ship was anywhere near. The weather had been deteriorating all day, and while the air strike was still in the preparation stage, Somerville had ordered the cruiser *Sheffield* to find and shadow the *Bismarck*. The order was flashed by signal searchlight and went only to the *Sheffield*. The *Ark Royal* never noticed her departure.

The striking force flew off a little later. The crews, flying through rain and mist, picked up a ship on their radar in roughly the expected position. Naturally assuming it was the *Bismarck*, they pressed home the attack.

It is hardly surprising that, in that tense moment, they should

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have failed to recognize the *Sheffield*. They went down expecting to see an enemy, and such is the power of suggestion, that it was as an enemy that most of them saw her.

On the *Sheffield*, Captain Larcom had received Somerville's signals that the air striking force had taken off, so he was not surprised when the planes came in sight. As he turned his glasses on to them, however, he suddenly realized that they were diving down to attack his ship. Instantly he rang for full speed and put his wheel over to confuse the attackers' aim. Not a gun was fired by the *Sheffield*, and her officers and men watched in silence as the torpedoes dropped towards the water.

The first fell into the sea with a heavy splash, and the impotent observers braced themselves. A moment later their attention was focused on something even more arresting. As the second torpedo touched the water it detonated with a thunderous roar. The next did the same thing. The torpedo-heads had been armed with magnetic pistols, and these were going off on hitting the water.

Of the remaining torpedoes, three exploded innocuously. And three aircraft realized that a mistake was being made and withheld their torpedoes. Thus there were only six or seven dangerous torpedoes for the *Sheffield* to contend with. With every spare officer and man on the bridge scanning the sea for the tell-tale tracks, Captain Larcom swung the ship one way and another to avoid the torpedoes, and with such skill that all passed harmlessly by.

IT WAS a gloomy set of airmen who returned to the carrier, but they were to have another chance. With the ship rolling heavily, aircraft were refuelled and more torpedoes got ready. One lesson at least had been learned: the magnetic pistols were unreliable. It was decided to use the old and well-tried contact pistols.

By 7 p.m. the striking force was again up on deck and ranged. It was still blowing hard. Visibility was variable and heavy rain was sweeping across the sea. As the planes took off, everyone on the *Ark Royal* knew they meant to succeed this time.

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About forty minutes later the *Sheffield* sighted them. She signalled "enemy twelve miles dead ahead," and they were seen climbing into the clouds. After an interval there came an outburst of gunfire, fine on the starboard bow, and the bright winking of numerous shell-bursts in the air.

The distant display of anti-aircraft fire flashed and sparkled for some minutes and then died away. There was a pause and then those on the bridge of the *Sheffield* saw first one and then two more planes flying back. They came past low and on a level with the bridge. Their torpedoes had gone, and as one flew by close the crew were smiling broadly and had their thumbs held upward. All those on the *Sheffield's* bridge and upper deck took off their caps and gave them a cheer.

When the air striking force had returned to the *Ark Royal* it was found that five planes had been damaged by gunfire. In one, 127 holes were counted, the pilot and air gunner having both been wounded. But despite all this and the failing light, only one aircraft crashed. After the crews were interrogated, it was established that one hit had been obtained amidships on the *Bismarck*.

Presently, reports to Admiral Tovey from the *Sheffield* and later from a shadowing aircraft of the *Ark Royal* indicated that the *Bismarck* had turned round in her tracks and was now moving in a general northward direction. Why was she behaving in this strange, and indeed suicidal, manner? Could it be that her rudders had been damaged and that she was no longer under control?

Confirmation of this heartening theory was received when the last straggling aircraft shadowers got back to the *Ark Royal* with practically empty tanks. When they had somehow managed to land, despite the darkness and the lively pitching of the ship, they gave important information: immediately after the aircraft attack the *Bismarck* had made two complete circles and had apparently come to a stop heading north, on which point of the compass she lay wallowing in the seas. Now the evidence was clear.

After the strain, anxieties and disappointments of the past few

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days, when hope of catching the *Bismarck* had declined practically to zero, the enemy's evident disablement seemed almost too good to be true. To the senior officers, particularly, the relief was immense. They, who had known the general strategical situation as their juniors had not, had previously almost despaired of getting the *Bismarck*. They had realized that the air attack which had done the vital damage was virtually the last hope of slowing up the *Bismarck* and thus preventing her escape; and that such a last-minute attempt should be an overwhelming success was beyond reasonable expectation. It was hundreds to one against it happening. Yet, the one forlorn chance had come off.

THE NEXT DAY, 27th May, dawned with the poor visibility of a stormy horizon. At 8.15 a.m. the *Norfolk* sighted the *Bismarck* about eight miles ahead and signalled the news to the *King George V* and the *Rodney*.

At 8.47 a.m. the *Rodney's* sixteen-inch guns opened the battle. As the salvo was due to fall, the *King George V's* guns flashed. The *Bismarck* remained silent for two minutes. Then she joined in. Her third salvo straddled the *Rodney* and nearly hit her. Captain Dalrymple-Hamilton altered course to bring more guns to bear, and began to subject the *Bismarck* to heavier gunfire than she herself could develop.

At 8.54 the *Norfolk* opened fire with eight-inch guns at 20,000 yards. The *King George V* and the *Rodney*, which had now come in to even lesser ranges, brought their secondary armament into action. And at 9.04 the cruiser *Dorsetshire*, from Force H, joined in the action.

The enemy's gunnery efficiency was now noticeably falling off. During the next few minutes both British battleships went in closer, and details of the *Bismarck* were easily discernible through binoculars. Obvious signs of punishment were visible. A fairly large fire was blazing amidships. Some of her guns seemed to have been silenced and the others were firing only spasmodically. The

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*Norfolk* saw two of the forward fifteen-inch guns run down to maximum depression, as if a British hit had caused a failure of hydraulic power in the turret.

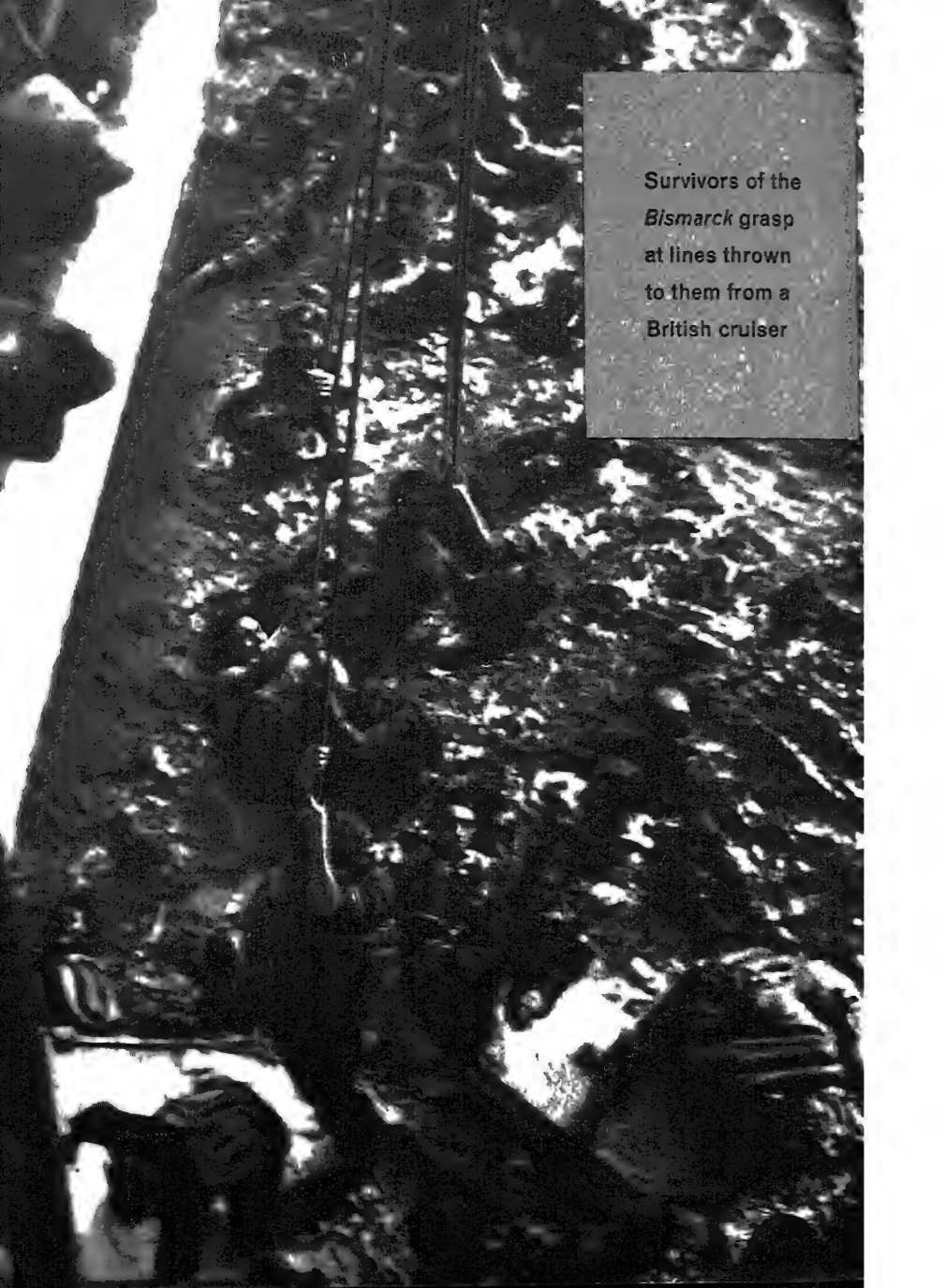
At lessening ranges, the two British battleships poured in a heavy fire from both main and secondary armament guns. A large explosion occurred just abaft the upper of the *Bismarck's* two foremost turrets which blew the back of it up over the bridge. A spectacular hit blew away the fifteen-inch aloft director, which toppled over the side.

The *Bismarck's* speed had by now been reduced to an unsteady crawl, and the British battleships had to zigzag back and forth to keep their guns trained on her. It would have been simpler to have shot the battle out on a broadside bearing; but this could have been done only by slowing down to the enemy's speed, which was too low for safety against possible submarines.

By 10 a.m. the *Bismarck* was a silent, battered wreck. Her mast was down, her funnel had disappeared, her guns were pointing in all directions, and a cloud of black smoke was rising from the middle of the ship. Inside she was clearly a blazing inferno, for the bright glow of internal fires could be seen shining through numerous shell and splinter holes in her sides. Her men were deserting their guns, and parties of them could be seen running to and fro on the upper deck as the British shells continued to rain in, and occasionally jumping over the side to escape by watery death from the terror on board.

But the *Bismarck's* flag still flew. Ostensibly, at least, she remained defiant. Powerless, and surrounded by enemies, she did not surrender.

The British were determined to sink her, and as quickly as they could. At any moment long-distance German aircraft might appear or torpedoes come streaking in from U-boats that were already amazingly late in arriving on the scene; and nagging anxiety over the acute fuel shortage added to the urgency. Sir John Tovey's impatience showed itself by a desire for point-blank range. "Get



Survivors of the  
*Bismarck* grasp  
at lines thrown  
to them from a  
British cruiser

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closer, get closer," he began to tell Captain Patterson, "I can't see enough hits."

The *Rodney* was now firing nine-gun broadsides at the *Bismarck* from sixteen-inch guns, the huge shells hitting her in threes and fours at a time. A torpedo from the *Rodney* also hit the *Bismarck* amidships. The *Norfolk* believed she had obtained at least one torpedo hit. But still the *Bismarck* floated.

However, it was obvious now that the burning hulk, lying deep and sluggish in the water, would never get back to harbour, whether she sank now or later. At 10.15 a.m. Sir John Tovey on the *King George V* signalled to the *Rodney* to form astern. He had already waited dangerously long, and now he was going home.

As he steered away, the *Dorsetshire* fired two torpedoes at the *Bismarck's* starboard side, one of which exploded right under the bridge. The cruiser then steered round to her port side and fired another torpedo which also hit. The shattered leviathan, her colours still flying, silently heeled over to port, turned bottom up, and disappeared beneath the waves.

The great chase was over. The mighty *Bismarck* had been disposed of after a gallant fight against superior forces. All that remained of her was several hundred heads of swimming men, visible on the surface of the breaking seas. The cruiser *Dorsetshire* and the destroyer *Maori* managed to pick up 110 of them. Then came a look-out's report of a submarine periscope, and the British ships withdrew.

The destruction of the *Bismarck* was one of the longest continuous chases in naval history. In point of dramatic reversals of fortune, of the frequent alternation of high optimism and blank disappointment, of brilliant victory followed quickly by utter defeat, it is probably unique in warfare.

*Condensed from "The Bismarck Episode," published by Faber & Faber, London*



## **A Night to Remember**

*By Quentin Reynolds*

IT HAD BEEN a warm, cloudless day in London, and the night was as cloudless, but star-studded, and lit by a full moon. It was Saturday, 10th May 1941.

There were about fifty of us American correspondents in London then, and for the most part we were a discouraged lot. With Russia remaining aloof, the full weight of the Nazi Air Force was being hurled at Britain. German submarines had destroyed half a million tons of Allied shipping in April alone. The British Army had been thrown back into Egypt, and it was expected that the Suez Canal would be the next to go. Greece and Yugoslavia had been lost, and Germany was gaining control of the whole Mediterranean.

Portsmouth, Southampton, Liverpool and other ports had been almost mortally injured, and the busy shipyards on the Clyde had also been bombed. Some 43,000 civilians had been killed. But London was still standing, and the people, if tired, were tight-lipped and determined.

That's how it was on that Saturday night in May. Most of us lived and worked at the Savoy Hotel. When the sirens sounded that night we paid little attention; this was routine. But an hour later we realized that this wasn't just another raid; tonight the Luftwaffe was throwing the book at us, taking full advantage of the Bomber's Moon and the cloudless sky.

The Savoy had given the Press a room and had put a man named

Titch in charge. We called it Titch's Bar. Titch was a stocky, sandy-haired man who always wore a worried look. He had a passion for clean glasses, and he spent every afternoon shining them. When bombs fell close, his look of worry always deepened; he was afraid that the concussion might break his glasses. There were several tables in the small room. One held a chess-board. Two reporters, one British and one American, completely oblivious to the din outside, were bent over it. A news teleprinter clicked monotonously, but it was a reassuring sound.

Under the almost constant explosions there was a dull crackling roar; the sound hung in the room. I walked outside. The sustained roar was louder here; across the Thames there was a solid sheet of flame among the warehouses. Tiny fireboats out in the river were throwing pitifully small streams at the flames; the water seemed to feed the angry tongues of fire that reached higher and higher.

A colleague walked out of the hotel. "The RAF says there are 400 plus over tonight. That's a lot of planes."

"We get any of them yet?"

"Only eight. Ack-ack can't get up high enough."

We went inside. The chess game was still going on. I fingered the yellow paper coming out of the teleprinter. This ticker seemed to be a link with a sane, stable world 3,000 miles away.

But the stories being tapped out seemed completely unreal. I read of "W. J. Haynes, Kansas City grain dealer," who had applied for a patent on an automatic soup bowl that sprinkled salt, cooled the soup and dunked biscuits into it. Sally Rand, bubble dancer, had performed at a Harvard University concert. When the students started their cry of "Take it off . . . take it off," she had cried back, "I will if you will." The story concluded, "Miss Rand finished her dance in a blizzard of shirts, socks and other items of men's apparel."

Could there actually be a world which read and laughed at this?

The big Savoy, all concrete and steel, shivered, and our small room was filled with the sound of a mighty explosion that made us sway a little and made our ears tingle. The blast swirled into the

## A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

room, its force dissipated, but vibrant enough to make the shining glasses on Titch's bar dance. Seven of them toppled over and smashed. Titch swore softly.

Two reporters stumbled into the room. Their faces were drawn, their clothes ragged, and their hands were scratched. They lived in a wooden house, one of a long row in Chelsea. A high explosive bomb had hit their street and destroyed every house but theirs; killed nearly everyone but them. They'd worked with the firemen, dragging the wounded from the burning buildings. Titch came from behind the bar with a bottle of brandy in his hand. "Got no iodine," he said, pouring the brandy over the cuts on their hands. "But brandy is a good disinfectant."

One of them noticed the label on the bottle and pulled his hand away. "Three-year-old brandy, Titch," he growled. "You *know* I never touch brandy that isn't twelve years old!"

We were all talking loudly because the blast had deafened us a little. But we could still hear the teleprinter. Nothing stopped that *click-click, click-click*.

More reports came in. It looked as if all London was on fire. The hours limped by on leaden feet. The telephone operator called to say that all wires were cut. We were isolated in our little oasis.

The lifts were running, and a colleague and I went up to the roof. It was as though we were on an island surrounded by a fiery sea. A hundred searchlights poked long, white, inquisitive fingers into the air, and the uneven sound of the German planes above was an insistent, sullen drone you couldn't shut out of your ears; it was like the buzzing of a million mosquitoes.

"Looks like they've hit the House of Commons," my colleague said, pointing.

Brilliantly white flares descended slowly, leisurely, outlining London for the bombers above. On the right, the huge dome of St. Paul's gleamed whitely.

"This is a date we'll remember," he added grimly.

We both felt as though we were sitting by the bedside of a dying

friend. We had come to know London and the people of London, and we felt close to this gallant city, and now she was dying. There could be no doubt of it, we thought. Chunks of spent shrapnel from anti-aircraft shells began to spatter on the roof. No heroes we—we went below.

Some smoke had drifted into the room, and people looked strange because the soot and the smoke had put dark, grotesque masks on their faces. Fragmentary reports kept coming in. The Ministry of Information said that the Germans had started at least 3,000 fires and that casualties among firemen and air raid wardens were high. At least 2,000 killed, the Ministry said, though it would be days before an accurate check could be made. Seventy warehouses and factories had gone up in smoke. . . .

And then a shrill sound penetrated the roar of the flames. We looked at each other unbelievably—it was over. This was the All Clear. The dawn, greatest enemy of the night bomber, had finally arrived. But we felt that it had arrived too late.

A heavy pall of smoke hung over the city. Thin-lipped, tight-faced men and women were emerging from the Underground and the shelters. Many carried sleeping children. The flames were still shooting skyward from the burning houses; without doubt this had been the worst raid of the war.

We walked to the House of Commons. The flames had been checked, but smoke still curled out of the roof. A car stopped, and a stocky man with a cigar in his mouth got out and walked into the House. He emerged within a few minutes, and his face was angry. Churchill's eyes were unseeing and hard as he climbed into the car.

We went to the Ministry of Information. Some of our colleagues were there. An air-marshal strode briskly into the room. To our surprise he didn't seem discouraged. In fact, he was smiling.

"It's been quite a night," he said. "A lot of damage done. They did not hit the Battersea Power Station, but they hit damn near everything else. The water has failed; they're trying to pump water up from the Thames, but it'll be twenty-four hours before the fires



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are under control. It probably looked bad to you gentlemen—it was, of course, the worst blitz we've had—but, gentlemen," he added calmly, "I believe we won the war tonight."

He saw the startled looks on our faces and smiled.

"You've heard us say in the Air Ministry," he said, "that any time we can inflict ten per cent casualties on a German air force we are keeping on top of them. No air force can stand such attrition for long. Our best estimate at the moment is that 450 German aircraft participated in the raid. Our incomplete figures reveal that we downed forty-five\* of them. It is the first time we have inflicted such casualties in a night raid. It means that our night fighters, with their new detecting devices, are a complete success. Germany cannot afford to lose forty-five trained crews on a single raid.

"Yes, gentlemen, we who are in the Royal Air Force are very pleased indeed."

We left the building in a thoughtful mood. Could it be true—what the air-marshal had said? Had London really survived? The smoke was beginning to lift, and a strong, cheerful sun was breaking through. Incredibly, there were a dozen taxicabs outside the Ministry. The drivers looked cheerful. We drove back to the Savoy. Some streets were impassable; we had to make a few detours. But the fires had died down. Crews were already at work repairing the smashed water mains. Buses were actually running in the Strand.

"'There'll Always Be an England,' " Titch hummed, bringing in a huge tray with pots of steaming tea and plates of toast. That song had not been popular in London. People thought it corny. But somehow it didn't seem corny now. Perhaps it was just the simple, unvarnished truth. Perhaps this England *was* indestructible. If it could survive a night like this it could survive anything.

The tenth of May, 1941. That's a night to remember, all right.

*Condensed from Redbook*

\* The final official postwar count gave the figures as ten downed, two damaged

## **The Case of the Seasick Stoker**

*By John Rhodes Sturdy*

THIS IS the story of the part played by a corvette of the Royal Canadian Navy, the *Matapedia*, in easing the suffering of countless Allied seamen during the war. In fact, there are ex-crew members of the *Matapedia* who firmly believe that our crew were responsible for winning the war. Personally I would have given our Stoker Mahoney a medal. But I was only a sub-lieutenant (temporary), and as it turned out the credit went to others—including a couple of doctors named Charles Best, co-discoverer of insulin, and Wilder Penfield, renowned head of the Montreal Neurological Institute.

They were among the eminent medical men and research scientists who developed Pill No. 2-183.

But we made it possible.

This was no ordinary pill. Officially known as the Royal Canadian Navy Seasickness Remedy, it gave protection against one of man's ghastliest miseries. Until it emerged from the laboratory in 1943, there were times when some doubt existed as to which was the greater menace in the Battle of the Atlantic: the enemy lurking below the surface of the sea, or the heaving innards of Allied seamen. Pill No. 2-183 settled the stomachs in many a rolling ship and pitching landing-craft, and no doubt helped to bring victory.

The remarkable thing about the development of Pill 2-183 is that the doctors were seeking a remedy for an ailment that, until a

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short time before, did not officially exist. Throughout the centuries since man first went to sea, the medical profession had maintained a strange and stubborn attitude towards seasickness. A man might lie moaning in a ship's bunk, or be too weak to crawl to the rail, but actually nothing was wrong with him *medically*. Until, that is, His Majesty's Canadian corvette *Matapedia* made her determined and hitherto unsung stand in the dark winter of 1941.

The *Matapedia* was one of the early convoy escort-vessels built to fight the U-boat menace in the North Atlantic. Her western base was St. John's, Newfoundland; the eastern terminus was a wild and forsaken Icelandic fiord. A round trip took about a month. None of the Canadian corvettes had doctors, and we had to rely for medical advice on the odd destroyer we might meet.

Stoker Mahoney, the reluctant hero of this story, joined the *Matapedia* in December 1941. He had been trying desperately to get to sea, and this was his first ship. He was a proud and patriotic man when the *Matapedia* eased out of St. John's harbour. Ten minutes later Stoker Mahoney was flat on his back, violently ill.

Of course, he was by no means alone in his agony. By the time the little ship had settled into her familiar corkscrew motion for which corvettes were infamous, a large percentage of the crew and officers were feeling unwell. But while most of the men recovered as soon as they got their sea legs, it became apparent that Stoker Mahoney had all the symptoms of a chronic case. The chief engineer reported to the captain that the new hand was useless at his job and had been told to remain in his hammock.

As the voyage progressed, the sick stoker became cause for serious alarm. On one occasion when I went to see him, his grey face had a cadaverous look. He had lost considerable weight, and being small he now presented a frightening appearance. Moreover, he had given up interest in everything, including life.

Sixteen and a half days out of St. John's found the *Matapedia* in Iceland, tied up alongside a big British depot ship which carried several medical officers. We handed Stoker Mahoney over to them,



convinced that they would order him into sick bay for a long cure.

I was delegated to go aboard the depot ship and obtain the medical report on Mahoney. "I suppose you're here about Mahoney," the medical officer said. "There's nothing wrong with him."

"He's a seasickness case," I said.

"Nonsense. Lots of chappies get seasick," the surgeon-commander said. "He'll joggle out of it in a few days."

"Mahoney is a chronic case, sir," I persisted. "Before he joggles out of it he'll be dead."

"Now, look here," the commander said, "I've examined the chap thoroughly, and except for being a trifle undernourished, he's really in top-hole shape. Heart and lungs absolutely first-class. I can't take him off your complement without a valid reason."

We had no alternative, then, but to accept Stoker Mahoney back aboard, and when we sailed from Iceland the poor man was with us, sicker than ever.

Off the coast of Iceland we ran into an eighty-mile-an-hour gale that smashed our bridge, and when we finally reached the Atlantic coast we were ordered to Halifax for repairs. From the captain down to the most ordinary seaman there was one thought aboard the *Matapedia*: to get to Halifax before Stoker Mahoney died.

We knew he was dying, if not from seasickness, then from starvation and weakness. The voyage to Halifax was a race, and we won it. Once the ship was tied up to the jetty and motionless, Mahoney was able to keep down some nourishment. We got him off to the base medical office, trusting that this would be the first step in his journey to some landlocked naval detachment.

Two hours later he was back.

"What are you doing here, Mahoney?" the astonished officer of the watch demanded.

"I was told to report back aboard, sir," the unhappy stoker said. "I've got to rejoin my ship, they said."

"Didn't you see the medical officer?"

"Yes, sir. And he said there was nothing wrong with me."

## THE CASE OF THE SEASICK STOKER

This news was passed along to the captain, who took it grimly. It was obvious that Mahoney could not survive another spell at sea. A conference was called, and several possible courses of action were presented and promptly discarded as unfeasible.

"Actually," I said finally, "this thing is bigger than Mahoney. It touches on the entire war effort. We can't stop now. We've got to carry it right through to the end."

Starting at a low level, we progressed up the ladder through the various echelons of the Executive Branch. In some instances we received a sympathetic hearing, but everyone declared that his hands were tied. If the Medical Branch refused to accept chronic seasickness as a fact, then it was hopeless, because no one but an admiral could dictate to the Medical Branch.

"All right," our captain said, "we'll ruddy well see the admiral."

I like to think that our interview with Rear-Admiral George Jones, Commanding Officer, Atlantic Coast (Halifax), was a glorious moment in the history of the Allied forces in the Second World War. The admiral listened sympathetically to our presentation of the Mahoney case. From my back seat, where my one gold stripe was not too conspicuous, I chose the opportunity to enlarge on the theme. It was unfortunate, I said, that the RCN was a navy of small ships which did not rate medical officers. All these young medical men were rushing to the colours, anxious to wear the proud navy blue, yet except for a few appointed to destroyers or sent on loan to Britain, they were denied the opportunity of seeing the broad Atlantic from the deck of a warship.

The admiral seemed aware that there were many medical officers in Halifax at that time. He confirmed this by calling in his chief of staff, who advised him that a new draft of surgeon-lieutenants had recently arrived from Toronto.

"Fine. What is the weather forecast for tomorrow "

"Strong easterly winds, sir."

"Right," the admiral said. "Arrange for a ship to take all available medical officers on manoeuvres tomorrow."

## THE CASE OF THE SEASICK STOKER

The admiral looked at the delegation from the *Matapedia*. "Nothing like a little sea time to clear away the cobwebs," he remarked cheerfully.

The ship taking the medical party to sea was a Bangor-class mine-sweeper which, if anything, was even more uncomfortable than a corvette. She cleared the harbour at 0600 hours, crowded to the gunwales with men wearing the red and gold of the Medical Branch. Late that evening she returned.

The following morning I went to see the first lieutenant of the mine-sweeper. All he could tell me about the cruise was that it was "a ruddy shambles." Then he added, "You know, there was such a crush of those medical officers trying to get to the rail that we had to organize them in parties. We'd call out, 'First Seasick Party, ho! Advance three steps to the rail—all together now! First Seasick Party about face, Second Seasick Party, fall in!'"

Meanwhile we had worked fast. Before the medical office was open that morning, Stoker Mahoney was parked on the steps, carrying his papers and the ship's file on his case. He was first in the queue when some medical officers, still looking a little green, reported for duty. Within half an hour Mahoney was back aboard ship to get his gear, his face wreathed in smiles. He showed us the folder containing his papers. Across it was stamped "Unfit for Sea Duty," and underneath, in shaky ink—"Chronic Seasickness."

Aboard the *Matapedia* there was a victory celebration that night. We had put seasickness on the medical map.

We make no boastful claims about the subsequent course of events. Suffice it to say that when the medical profession accepts the fact that a condition exists, they usually lose no time in seeking a cure for it. So finally, in 1943, out of the laboratories emerged a mixture of hyoscine HBr, hyoscyamine HBr and ethyl-B-methyl allyl-thiobarbituric acid that became the famous Pill No. 2-183.

Let the honours fall where they may. We of the *Matapedia* will be content with this small postscript.

*Condensed from Maclean's Magazine*

***El Alamein: 1942***

## **Two Men and an Army**

*By Allan Michie*

IN THE hot, stinking summer of 1942 Cairo was in a "flap." The German-Italian armies of Field-Marshal Erwin Rommel were but a morning's drive from Egypt's capital. The great offensive into Libya by the British 8th Army which had begun so promisingly the winter before had misfired and the British troops had fallen back towards the Nile, their armoured equipment smashed or captured.

General Sir Claude Auchinleck, Middle East Commander-in-Chief, had taken personal command of the 8th Army and rallied the bewildered, discouraged troops at El Alamein on a makeshift defence line that ran from the blue Mediterranean forty miles inland to the treacherous quicksands of the Qattara Depression. The Axis was being held, but for how long no one knew.

Barely seventy miles ahead of Rommel lay the great British naval base of Alexandria, and just beyond it the glittering prize for which Axis arms had struggled for three years—the Suez Canal, gateway to India and junction with Japan. Obviously, Rommel would be willing to risk all to reach this goal.

The indifferent Egyptians prepared to accept their Axis conquerors. Anti-British students openly cheered Rommel's name in the streets. Wives of British officers, and wealthy Britons and American businessmen hastily departed.

Less than six months later Rommel's once-proud Afrika Korps

had been humiliated. It had been chased farther than any army in history—some 1,600 miles. Penned in a narrow box between Bizerta and Tunis, it surrendered helplessly.

Many things helped beat Rommel—the excellence and quantity of British-American equipment, Allied air superiority, perfect co-operation between ground and air units. But the story of those six months which changed the course of the war and the destiny of the world is, after all, largely the story of two men and an army.

Few cocktail sippers in Cairo's Shepherd's Hotel bothered to look up that summer day in 1942 as a scrawny, long-nosed British general arrived, glanced at them disapprovingly and strode across the terrace. Few, indeed, would have recognized him, for Lieutenant-General Sir Bernard Law Montgomery, newly appointed commander of the 8th Army, was unknown except in military circles.

The army regarded him as a somewhat eccentric but competent officer with a passion for hard work; a devout, dour, humourless abstainer who neither drank, smoked nor swore. He had distinguished himself as a young officer in the First World War, and had since won the reputation of being a good divisional commander. An admirer of Oliver Cromwell, Montgomery himself had a Cromwellian streak. "I read my Bible every day and I recommend you to do the same," he had told his staff. His other favourite book was *Pilgrim's Progress*.

The troops he had commanded in Britain remembered him as a stern disciplinarian who had put them through gruelling endurance tests. A fanatic on fitness, Montgomery required all his men and officers up to brigadiers to run a seven-mile course once a week, and he usually ran the route with them. When the older officers complained, he changed it to a six-mile run.

The battle-hardened veterans of the 8th Army had heard about this "Spartan general" and weren't too sure they would like him. Before long, however, they were calling him "Monty," and crowding round for a look at him whenever he appeared.

Montgomery was actually second choice as 8th Army commander

summoned only after Lieutenant-General William Gott had died in a plane crash on his way to Cairo. But he had long been marked for a high command. In the spring of 1942 the American Ambassador in London, John Winant, was asked to circulate among British army men, size them up, and recommend a commander suitable for British and American forces. During a visit to Monty, he asked, "General, suppose you were ordered tonight to attack Calais—how long would it take you to plan an offensive and get into action?" Winant expected an answer running into weeks. Instead, Monty phoned his staff headquarters. At dawn next day his divisions staged a full-dress mock attack against the "Germans." Winant was so much impressed that he recommended Montgomery as leader of the Anglo-American North African offensive, then in its preliminary planning stages.

General Alexander, who had been appointed to replace Auchinleck as Middle East Commander-in-Chief, was Montgomery's close friend. Both men had been in tight spots before. Alexander, an aggressive fighter whose motto was "Attack, attack and re-attack, even when you are on the defensive," had ironically been fated to conduct two of Britain's great retreats—Dunkirk and Burma.

At Dunkirk, Alexander organized the final evacuation. When one of his aides moaned, "The situation is catastrophic," Alexander retorted crisply, "I am sorry, I don't understand long words like that." His studied coolness communicated itself to the men waiting patiently for boats while Nazi dive bombers roared overhead. When there was nothing more to do but wait and suffer, he squatted on the beach and built himself a sand castle. In the fading light of the last day he toured the sands to see that no live soldier had been left behind. He and a naval officer were the last to leave.

The situation in Burma was hopeless when Alexander was flown out to take command. He was instructed to hold the Japanese as long as possible so that Wavell could organize the defence of India. With his tiny, ill-equipped army of 25,000 he fought 100,000 Japs for four months, and escaped across the only mountain road into India a few days before the monsoon made the road impassable. In

British military circles, this is regarded as a feat second only to the masterful evacuation from Dunkirk.

Montgomery had been at Dunkirk, too. He had told his men, "If you run out of ammunition, tear the enemy to pieces with your hands." After Dunkirk he and Alexander were given adjoining commands on the south and south-east of England, which was certain to bear the brunt if the Nazis invaded.

These were the two men whom Churchill brought together to save the crucial Middle East. Churchill's orders were simple: "Rommel must be destroyed." The strategy was simple: The Alamein line must be held at all costs until new equipment and reserves reached the desert, and then the Africa Korps must be pushed back. The strategical job of co-ordinating the 8th Army's advance with the British-American invasion of North Africa, then in the making, was Alexander's job. The tactics of defeating Rommel were left to Montgomery.

Wasting no time in Cairo's brain-fogging atmosphere, Montgomery drove into the desert early on the morning after his arrival and climbed the humpy Hill of Jesus, farthest advanced salient of the Alamein line. Through binoculars he scanned the enemy lines, less than 2,000 yards away across the sizzling desert.

Behind Rommel's front lines stood scores of concealed 88-mm. guns, the scourge of British and American tanks. Behind them lay at least 300 tanks and in the rear some 850 additional tanks. Rommel had 160,000 soldiers, and more were arriving every day as the Nazi supply lines improved.

The Alamein line was a bottle-neck whichever side you stood on. The British troops prevented Rommel from fanning out into the Valley of the Nile. But Rommel's troops were a cork the British would have to dislodge before they could go anywhere.

Those who saw Monty that day on the Hill of Jesus believed that he decided on the spot just how and when Rommel could be defeated. That night in his caravan-headquarters of four trailers, captured in 1941 from Italian General "Electric Whiskers" Berganzoli,

he began drafting the tactical plan that was to carry him half-way across Africa on Rommel's heels.

Montgomery realized at once that the character of desert warfare had temporarily altered. The war of tank versus tank, of sea-style battles on the wide open sands, had for the moment changed to the static trench warfare of the First World War. For the Alamein battle the offensive weapon would again be the "poor bloody infantry" of the previous war, with artillery and the air arm paving the way. The tanks would have to wait until the cork was driven out.

On paper, at least, Monty felt he had an even chance to succeed. If he did, and if he could destroy the German tanks, he knew that Rommel would have to cut and run. In the desert you don't stand and fight without armour.

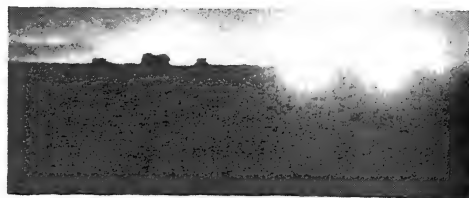
The 8th Army already had half a dozen crack infantry divisions in the line—including tough New Zealanders and Australians, veterans of Greece and Crete, unmatched in close-quarter bayonet work; and the 4th Indian Division, which had stormed the Italian-held cliffs of Keren in Abyssinia and taken rocky "Hellfire Pass" in Egypt from the Germans. Churchill had promised two additional divisions, plentiful numbers of the new British six-pounder anti-tank gun, a great concentration of aircraft, new British heavy tanks and several hundred new American Sherman tanks with high-velocity 75-mm. guns, already being unloaded at Suez.

Monty asked for two months to get ready for an offensive. Meantime, the job was to hold off Rommel's attack. It came three weeks after Monty arrived. Rommel threw the full weight of 300 tanks against the centre and south of the line, feeling for a weak spot through which the armour could flow and flank the British positions—the traditional Rommel tactics. Monty, carefully hoarding his armour, refused to fight a battle of metal. Craftily he allowed Rommel's tanks to flow into fissures in the defences—then he met them with anti-tank guns and the 75-mm. guns of the American-made General Grant tanks, lying hull down in the sand dunes. When the Nazi commander finally withdrew he had lost 140 tanks, almost half

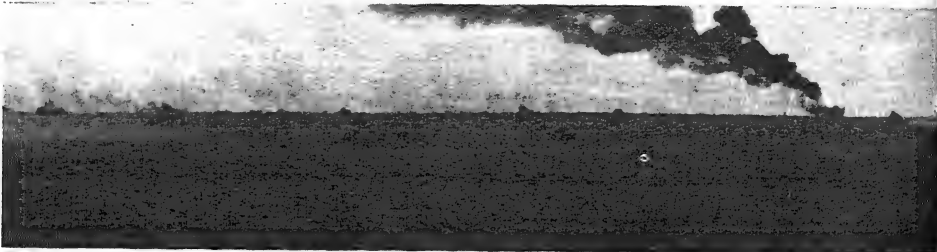




**Above: Alexander and Montgomery:  
victors of the desert campaign**

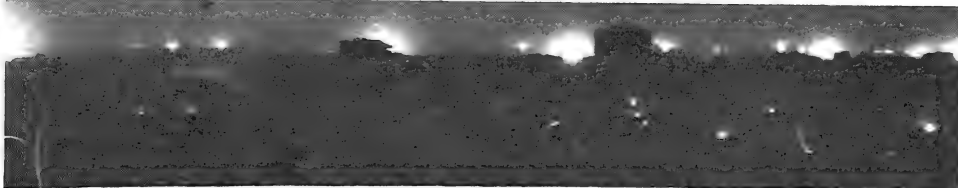


**ht: Troop carriers find a path through the  
inefields—but come under heavy shellfire**



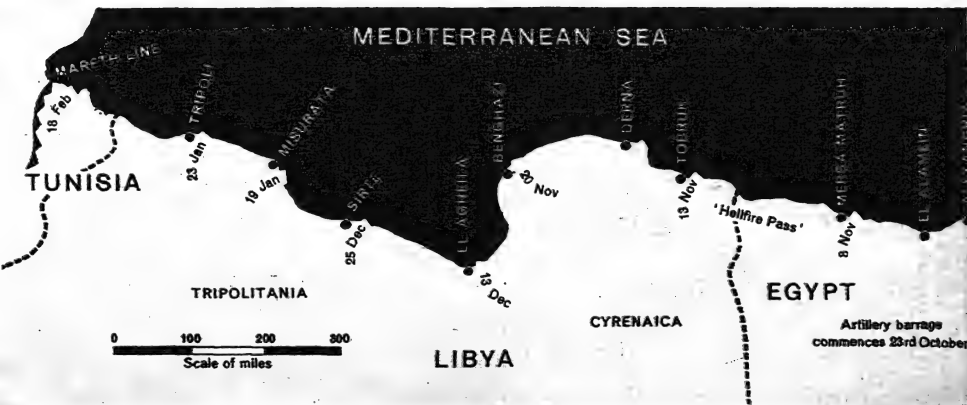
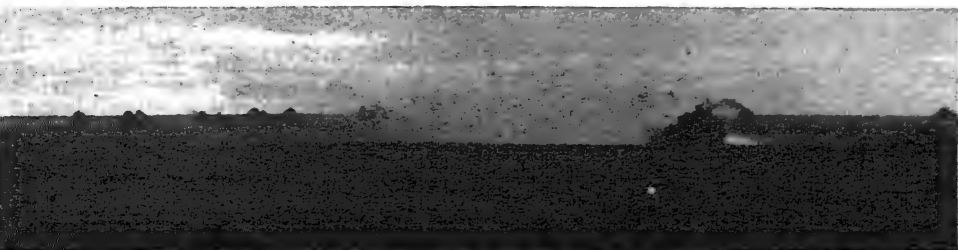
**Above: A lazy pall  
of smoke rises  
from a crippled  
British tank as enemy  
squadrons appear on  
the horizon at  
Miteiriya Ridge**

**Left: Under cover of  
smoke, an Australian  
officer leads his men  
in an attack on an  
enemy strongpoint**



Above: The Allied artillery barrage commences. This photograph, taken from a position near the enemy lines, shows ambulances and troop carriers position ready for the infantry attack that is to come

Left: A near miss raises a spout of sand in front of an advancing British t



his forward armoured strength. The British had lost thirty-seven.

"Egypt has been saved," announced Montgomery, confidently. "With the superiority in tanks and planes I have established as a result of this battle, it is now mathematically certain that I will eventually destroy Rommel."

Monty sounded boastful. And so he was. But he had what it took to make good all his boasts so far. He believed in meticulous planning. He insisted on knowing down to the last bullet what resources he had. On his daily visits to the front, he surprised field commanders by knowing more about their troop dispositions than they did. Every division, regiment, battalion, battery and platoon had its exact task. Monty saw that it was carried out to the letter. That was his formula for success.

His offensive against Rommel was worked out to the last tin of bully-beef. On 23rd October 1942, a night on which the moon was right for all-night fighting, he was ready to attack.

For two weeks Allied planes had been bombing strategic targets in Rommel's rear, while British and American fighter planes sought to knock the Luftwaffe out of the skies. As zero hour approached, the air attack was stepped up. Bombers shuttled back and forth to Rommel's supply lines and airfields, while fighters strafed his front lines and gun posts. Montgomery believed that every man should know what was going on and what was expected of him, so while the air attack was under way he called in his officers, told them his plans and sent them back to tell their units.

Thirty minutes before zero hour came a barrage the like of which had not been seen since the First World War. British guns stood almost hub-to-hub along the forty-mile Alamein line. Monty had always preached that a barrage should be on a scale sufficient to shake the enemy's morale. At ten p.m., while the barrage inched forward, sappers began clearing wide paths through the minefields. After them came the infantry, doggedly working forward from one Axis position to another.

All that night and the next day and for several days more the

battle swayed back and forth over this desert version of Flanders Fields. Rommel counter-attacked furiously; for every yard won and lost, men died. Then on 2nd November Montgomery judged the time had come for his surprise punch. The Sherman tanks emerged from their tarpaulin camouflage and rolled forward. At El Aqqaqir they met and trounced the remains of Rommel's 15th and 21st panzer divisions, knocking out two-thirds of Rommel's 1,000 tanks. Monty was jubilant. In an order of the day to his troops, he said, "There is good hunting to be had farther to the west. On with the task and good hunting to you all!"

Rommel hastily piled his beaten Afrika Korps into trucks, leaving most of his Italians behind because he lacked transport for them, and fled back along the coast road. Fighting occasional rear-guard actions to gain time, he retreated past Matrûh, up "Hellfire Pass," beyond Tobruk, Derna, Benghazi, around to Tripoli and into Tunisia. On his heels, relentlessly pressing forward week after week, came Monty and his avenging 8th Army. Along the way they bagged 80,000 Italian and 20,000 German prisoners. Crowded Monty: "Nothing has stopped us, nothing will!"

Twice during his long retreat Rommel tried to make a stand, at El Aghéila and at the Mareth line. Each time Montgomery smashed the Axis defences. "Rommel is a skilled general," Monty remarked, "but he has one weakness. He repeats his tactics. And that's the way I'm going to get him."

Montgomery, on the other hand, showed himself versatile. For one battle he would take a page right out of the newest German rule-book, and the next time he would take a page from history. To crack the Alamein line he followed the pattern of First World War fighting. At the Mareth line he combined a frontal assault with a daring dash through the desert round the enemy's right flank. At other points along the face of Africa he broke the enemy's defences by all-armoured attacks.

Montgomery was convinced that earlier British reverses stemmed from inadequate co-operation among aircraft, ground troops and

artillery, and he was determined not to repeat that mistake. Air Marshal Sir Arthur Coningham lived at Monty's headquarters and together they hammered out a design of ground-air co-ordination that not only beat Rommel but served as a model for later Allied offensive operations.

As the 8th Army pursued Rommel along the Mediterranean, the spotlight of publicity hugged Montgomery. Alexander, back in Cairo's GHQ, was almost forgotten. But for routing Rommel the two men deserve about equal credit. They complemented each other perfectly. Alexander, able to see things in broad perspective, was an ideal man for handling the over-all military and diplomatic problems of the Middle East command. The explosive Montgomery provided the spark that made the 8th Army irresistible.

Both Montgomery and Alexander were, of course, professional soldiers. Montgomery joined the Royal Warwickshire Regiment straight from Sandhurst in 1908. In the First World War he was twice wounded and won the DSO and the Croix de Guerre. Between the wars he passed through the usual chain of assignments as a staff officer in Ireland, Britain and India, taught at the staff colleges at Camberley and at Quetta in Baluchistan, and commanded a division during "the troubles" in Palestine in 1938.

Alexander, one of the Old Contemptibles, commanded a battalion of the Irish Guards at the age of twenty-four in the First World War, went over the top thirty times before being severely wounded, and won the DSO and the MC. Between the wars he helped reorganize the Latvian army, fought on India's North-West Frontier, and held commands at Gibraltar and in Britain. At forty-five he was a major-general, at that time the youngest general in the British army. Both were still comparatively young for high command when they fought the desert battle—Alexander was fifty-one, Montgomery fifty-five.

But the two men were alike only in their military background. Alexander, third son of the fourth Earl of Caledon, was a polished product of Harrow. At one time he was aide to Edward VIII. He

was one of the few generals in the British army with an adequate private income.

Monty's father was an Anglican bishop who took his family to Tasmania when Bernard was a month old. Young Montgomery was intended for the church, but as a lad he saw Australians marching off to the Boer War and decided to become a soldier.

Alexander, suave, travelled, won his points by sheer charm. He was not a man to give way easily—but he was so polite he seemed self-effacing. Montgomery was brusque and staccato-voiced. He made no effort to conceal his egotism. He had a high theatrical sense, and never missed a chance for a touch of drama. When his troops captured Nazi General Wilhelm Ritter von Thoma, Monty promptly invited him to dinner. He kept a picture of Rommel pinned over his bed and wishes that he had known the Nazi field-marshal.

Somewhere in Egypt he picked up a German officer's suit of silk underwear, which he wore. He spurned the red hatband of the staff officer, and preferred an Australian slouch hat studded with the regimental badges of his troops or a sloppy tank corps beret.

He was a martinet. He dismissed his staff officers at the slightest provocation. Once he fired an officer assigned to his headquarters before the man had time to unpack his bags. "You are a good officer but you are not good enough for me," barked Monty. He used to open his lectures with the curt order: "I do not approve of smoking or coughing. There will be no smoking. For two minutes you may cough; thereafter coughing will cease for twenty minutes, when I shall allow another sixty seconds for coughing."

When he married, at the age of forty, he ran the household with military discipline, and later issued daily orders for the care and upbringing of his only son. When someone asked him if he wished for more children he replied, "Certainly not. There is far too much staff work involved."

The Alexander-Montgomery combination had the advantage of tackling the job at a time when first-class equipment, both British and American, was beginning to reach the 8th Army. But even with

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all the tanks and guns and planes, no general could have licked Rommel but for the unconquerable spirit of the fighting men who made up the 8th Army.

For almost three years they had waged heart-breaking see-saw campaigns across some of the toughest terrain in the world. They had endured the heat that turns rifle barrels hot as pokers in a fire, khamsin winds that burnt the swirling sand into their flesh, flies that covered their food and bodies, disease, disappointment and privation. Their losses had been heavy. The 4th Indian division, for example, had required 100 per cent replacement because of casualties since the opening of the desert war. All along the Mediterranean they had left their dead in shallow, lonely graves that are inscribed, "This is hallowed ground. They died in the service of their country."

Sometimes they had been badly led, as on that awful June day of 1942 when most of their tanks were sent into an ambush of Rommel's deadly 88-mm. guns. Once ninety heavy Valentine tanks rumbled on to a Nazi minefield and only nineteen came back, because someone had given a wrong compass bearing. Never had they had adequate equipment. In the early days against the Italians, they had held Egypt with fewer than 15,000 men, a few score antiquated armoured cars and eighty-seven planes.

But through long years of setbacks the men of the 8th Army refused to admit they were defeated and therefore never were defeated. They never lost confidence that, given the proper equipment, they could beat Rommel's armies. They waited a long time to prove that, man to fighting man, they were better soldiers than the Nazis.

Conceived in adversity, nurtured in defeat and retreat, the 8th Army grew in battle to be the best equipped, co-ordinated and experienced single fighting machine on the Allied side. It was left to Churchill to pay it the simple tribute of the free world when it marched proudly into Tripoli. Said the Prime Minister: "When after the war is over a man is asked what he did, it will be enough for him to say, 'I marched with the 8th Army.'"

## **The Girl Who Was Anne Frank**

*By Louis de Jong*

"AND HOW do you know that the human race is really *worth* saving?" an argumentative young student once asked his professor.

Said the professor: "I have read Anne Frank's diary."

How this diary of a teen-age girl came to be written and saved is a story as dramatic as the diary itself. No one could foresee the tremendous impact that the small book would have—not even her father, who had it published after Anne's death in a Nazi concentration camp.

*The Diary of Anne Frank* has now been published in nineteen languages, including German, and has sold about two million copies. Made into a play by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, it won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, and, in the 1956-7 season alone, played in twenty different countries to two million people. In London it ran for nearly six months at the Phoenix Theatre. Twentieth Century-Fox turned it into a film.

To understand this amazing response it is necessary first to understand the girl who was Anne Frank.

When Hitler came to power, Otto Frank was a banker, living in Germany. He had married in 1925. In 1926 his first daughter, Margot, was born, and three years later his second, Annelies Marie. She was usually called "Anne," sometimes "Tender one."

In the autumn of 1933, when Hitler was issuing one anti-Jewish



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decree after another, Otto Frank decided to emigrate to the hospitable Netherlands. He started a small firm in Amsterdam. Shortly before the outbreak of the war he took in a partner, Mr. Van Daan, a fellow refugee. Mostly they traded in spices. Business was often slow. Once Otto Frank was forced to ask his small staff to accept a temporary cut in their modest wages. No one left. They all liked his warm personality. They admired his courage and the evident care he took to give his two girls a good education.

As a pupil Anne was not particularly brilliant. Most people believed like her parents that Margot, her elder sister, was more promising. Anne was chiefly remarkable for the early interest she took in other people. She was emotional and strong-willed; "A real problem child," her father once told me, "a great talker and fond of nice clothes." Life in town, where she was usually surrounded by a chattering crowd of girl friends, suited her exactly. This was lucky because the Frank family could only rarely afford a holiday.

When the Nazis invaded the Netherlands in May 1940, the Franks were trapped. Earlier than most Jews in Amsterdam, Otto Frank had realized that the time might come when he and his family would have to go into hiding. He had decided to hide in his own business office, which faced one of Amsterdam's tree-lined canals. A few derelict rooms on the upper floors, called the "Annexe," had been secretly prepared to house both the Frank and the Van Daan families.

Early in July 1942, Margot Frank was called up for deportation, but she did not go. Straightaway the Franks moved into their hiding place, and the Van Daans followed shortly afterwards. Four months later they took into their cramped lodgings another Jew, a dentist.

They were eight hunted people. Any sound, any light might betray their presence. A tenuous link with the outside was provided by the radio and by four courageous members of Otto Frank's staff, two of them typists, who in secret brought food, magazines and books. The only other company they had was a cat.

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While in hiding, Anne decided to continue a diary which her parents had given her on her thirteenth birthday. She described life in the Annexe with all its inevitable tensions and quarrels. But she created first and foremost a wonderfully delicate record of adolescence, sketching with complete honesty a young girl's thoughts and feelings, her longing and loneliness. "I feel like a song-bird whose wings have been brutally torn off and who is flying in utter darkness against the bars of its own cage," she wrote when she had been isolated from the outside world for nearly sixteen months. Two months later she had filled every page of the diary, a small book bound in a tartan cloth, and one of the typists, Miep, gave her an ordinary exercise book. Later she used Margot's chemistry exercise book.

Her diary reveals the trust she puts in a wise father; her grief because, as she feels it, her mother does not understand her; the ecstasy of a first, rapturous kiss, exchanged with the Van Daans' seventeen-year-old son; finally, the flowering of a charmingly feminine personality, eager to face life with adult courage and mature self-insight.

On a slip of paper Anne wrote faked names which she intended to use in case of publication. For the time being the diary was her own secret which she wanted to keep from everyone, especially from the grumpy dentist with whom she had to share her tiny bedroom. Her father allowed her to put her diaries in his brief-case.

He never read them until after her death.

On 4th August 1944, one German and four Dutch Nazi policemen suddenly stormed upstairs. (How the secret of the Annexe had been revealed is not known.) "Where are your money and jewels?" they shouted. Mrs. Frank and Mrs. Van Daan had some gold and jewellery. They were quickly discovered. Looking round for something to carry them in, one of the policemen noticed Otto Frank's brief-case. He emptied it on to the floor, barely giving a glance at the notebooks. Then the people of the Annexe were arrested.

In the beginning of September, while the Allied armies were

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rapidly approaching the Netherlands, the Franks and Van Daans and the dentist were carried in cattle-trucks to Auschwitz—the Nazi death-camp in southern Poland. There the Nazis separated Otto Frank from his wife and daughters without giving them time to say farewell. Mrs. Frank, Anne and Margot were marched into the women's part of the camp, where Mrs. Frank soon died from exhaustion. The Van Daans and the dentist, too, lost their lives.

Anne proved to be a courageous leader of her small Auschwitz group. When there was nothing to eat, she dared to go to the kitchen to ask for food. She constantly told Margot never to give in. Once she passed hundreds of Hungarian-Jewish children who were standing naked in freezing rain, waiting to be led to the gas-chambers, unable to grasp the horrors inflicted upon them in the world of adults. "Oh look, their eyes . . ." she whispered.

Later in the autumn she and her sister were transported to another camp, Belsen, between Berlin and Hamburg. A close friend saw her there, "cold and hungry, her head shaved and her skeleton-like form draped in the coarse, shapeless, striped garb of the concentration camp." She was pitifully weak, her body racked by typhoid fever. She died early in March 1945, a few days after Margot. Both were buried in a mass grave.

In Auschwitz, Otto Frank had managed somehow to stay alive. He was freed early in 1945 by the Russians and in the summer he arrived back in liberated Amsterdam. A friend had told him that his wife had died, but he kept on hoping that Anne and Margot would return. After six weeks of waiting he met someone who had to tell him that both had perished. It was only then that Miep, his former typist, handed him Anne's diaries.

A week after the Frank family had been arrested, Miep had boldly returned to the Annexe. A heap of papers lay on the floor. Miep recognized Anne's handwriting and decided to keep the diary but not to read it. Had she read it, she would have found detailed information on the help she and other people had given the Frank

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family at the risk of their own lives, and she might well have decided to destroy the diary for reasons of safety.

It took Otto Frank many weeks to finish reading what his dead child had written. He broke down after every few pages. As his old mother was still alive—she had emigrated to Switzerland where other close relatives lived—he started copying the manuscript for her. Some passages which he felt to be too intimate or which might hurt other people's feelings were left out by him. The idea of publishing the diary did not enter his mind. He gave one typed copy to a close friend, who lent it to a professor of modern history. Much to Otto Frank's surprise the professor devoted an article to it in a Dutch newspaper.

His friends now urged Otto Frank to have Anne's diary published as she herself had wished; in one passage she had written: "I want to publish a book entitled *The Annexe* after the war. . . . My diary can serve this purpose." When Anne's father finally consented to publication, the manuscript was refused by two well-known Dutch publishers. A third decided to accept it and he has sold more than 150,000 copies of the Dutch edition.

Other editions followed—250,000 sold in Britain, a like number in Japan, 435,000 in the United States. Otto Frank began to receive hundreds of letters. One, from Italy, was addressed: "Otto Frank, father of Anne Frank, Amsterdam." A few people doubted the authenticity of the diary; most wrote to express their admiration and grief. Girls of Anne's age poured out their troubles: "Oh, Mr. Frank," wrote one girl, "she is so much like me that sometimes I do not know where my self begins and Anne Frank ends." Numerous people sent small presents. Some exquisite dolls were made for him by Japanese girls. A Dutch sculptress presented him with a statue of Anne. On the birthdays of Anne and Margot flowers arrived anonymously.

So many letters poured in that Otto Frank was forced to retire from business. The care of his daughter's diary has become his passion, his mission in life. He now lives modestly in Switzerland.

All royalties are devoted to humanitarian causes which, he feels, would have been approved by Anne. All letters are answered by him personally. Every day new ones sadly remind him of the losses he has suffered, but he feels that there is truth and consolation in what the headmistress of one of Britain's largest schools wrote to him: "It must be a source of deep joy to you—in all your sorrow—to know that Anne's life is, in the deepest sense, only just beginning."

The most remarkable response came from Germany. When the book's first printing of 4,500 copies came out in Germany in 1950, many booksellers were afraid to put it in their windows. Now sales of the German paper-back edition have reached astonishingly large figures.

When the play opened in seven German cities simultaneously, no one knew how the audiences would react. The drama progressed through its eight brief scenes. No Nazis were seen on the stage, but their ominous presence made itself felt every minute. Finally, at the end, Nazi jackboots were heard storming upstairs to raid the hiding place. At the close of the epilogue only Anne's father was on the stage, a lonely old man. Quietly he told how he received news that his wife and daughters had died. Picking up Anne's slim diary, he turned back the pages to find a certain passage and, as he found it, her young, confident voice was heard, saying: "In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart."

Packed audiences received Anne Frank's tragedy in a silence heavy with remorse. In Düsseldorf people did not even go out during the interval. "They sat in their seats as if afraid of the lights outside, ashamed to face each other," someone reported. The Düsseldorf producer explained: "*Anne Frank* has succeeded because it enables the audience to come to grips with history, personally and without denunciation. We watch it as an indictment, in the most humble, pitiful terms, of inhumanity to fellow men. No one accuses us as Germans. We accuse ourselves."

For years Germany's post-war administrators toiled to make

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people feel the senseless and criminal nature of the Nazi régime. On the whole they failed. *The Diary of Anne Frank* succeeded. The play has been presented in numerous cities and been seen by more than a million Germans. Leading actors have received dozens of letters. "I was a good Nazi," a typical letter read, "but I never knew what it meant until the other night." German schoolchildren sent Otto Frank letters telling him that Anne's diary had opened their eyes to the viciousness of racial persecution.

In West Berlin an Anne Frank Home was opened, devoted to social work for young people. The people of Berlin had chosen her name "to symbolize the spirit of racial and social tolerance." Elsewhere in Germany an organization was set up and named after her, to fight the remaining vestiges of anti-Semitism. In Vienna money was collected for the Anne Frank forest, to be planted in Israel.

More than 2,000 young Germans once attended a ceremony at the mass graves of Bergen-Belsen where Anne Frank had found her last resting place. As they laid flowers on the graves, a seventeen-year-old schoolgirl expressed what all felt: "Anne Frank was younger than we are when her life was so horribly ended. She had to die because others had decided to destroy her race. Never again among our people must such a diseased and inhuman hatred arise."

Anne's brief life has, indeed, only just begun. She is carrying a message of courage and tolerance to every part of the world. She lives after death.

## **Blueprint for Pearl Harbour**

*By Edwin Muller*

THE JAPANESE attack on Pearl Harbour, as everyone knows, followed a craftily conceived and elaborately detailed plan. But as few people outside the US Navy know, *that plan was not conceived in Tokyo*. It was created in Washington by the US Naval Planning Board.

The story goes back to January 1932 when the US fleet of nearly 200 warships, perhaps the most tremendous concentration of naval power ever assembled up to that time, gathered in Californian waters for manoeuvres which were to test the defences of Pearl Harbour. One part of the fleet would "attack"; the other, with the army garrison, would "defend."

The attacking fleet revolutionized naval strategy when, leaving all the proud battleships and cruisers behind, two aircraft-carriers—the *Saratoga* and the *Lexington*—streaked across the eastern Pacific with four destroyer escorts. Admiral H. E. Yarnell himself was on the *Saratoga* (instead of a battleship), in command of a brand-new naval group called a "task force." The Admiral was an air-minded officer who had made many flights with his squadrons—unusual in the US Navy of that day. Now he was applying the new carrier attack strategy on an objective already familiar to him from the air.

The defence of Pearl Harbour, planned primarily to meet a naval attack, was entrusted to a fleet that protected the approaches to the islands, a flotilla of submarines in the harbour, a full division of

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troops ashore and an immense concentration of heavy coast artillery which could be rapidly shifted on a well-planned system of railways and roads. An air defence had also been superimposed—batteries of anti-aircraft guns and 100 fighter planes and bombers.

As he had hoped, Admiral Yarnell ran into thick weather twenty-four hours off Oahu. This made it less likely that the defending fleet would spot him. Two carriers and four destroyers are a rather small group on the ocean—especially when the defenders are expecting a great invasion fleet. Nobody did see them.

By dusk on Saturday, 6th February, they were in position to reach Oahu by dawn in a forced run. Early on a Sunday morning, the Admiral reckoned, the defending forces might be a little less alert.

When darkness fell, the task force, running without lights and in radio silence, drove ahead full speed through rain squalls, low clouds and a rising wind. It was excellent weather in which to escape observation, but could they get the planes off in it? The destroyers were dipping their rails and even the big carriers were rolling heavily.

Admiral Yarnell held his planes until less than half an hour before dawn, when he was sixty miles off Oahu. Then, in the pitch darkness, 152 of them took off miraculously from the carriers pitching in the heavy seas.

This first aerial attack on Pearl Harbour came in from the north-east, exactly as the second and lethal Japanese attack was to do nine years later. Most of the winter the trade wind blows steadily from the north-east against the 2,800-foot Koolau Range, where it discharges its moisture. This condition is made-to-order for attack, because an air force can approach hidden in the towering wall of rain clouds and then emerge suddenly into clear weather over Pearl Harbour before defending planes can rise to intercept.

And so it happened on Sunday, 7th February 1932, when the bombers, fighters, dive bombers and torpedo planes from the *Saratoga* and *Lexington* emerged from the clouds to find the greatest naval base in the world spread helpless beneath them. Each group had its appointed task. The fighters "knocked out" the planes on the



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ground by simulated machine-gun strafing. No defending plane went up during the attack. Other groups, meanwhile, dropped their theoretical bombs on the military installations or "sank" all the hypothetical vessels in the harbour.

Complete domination of the air had been attained by the attackers. If the entire fleet had been lying in the harbour, and if Admiral Yarnell's flyers had carried real bombs, they could have sunk or damaged every ship.

The commanding officers of the navy held a "critique" right there in the theoretical ruins. The discussion there began was continued in naval circles everywhere. Many strategists saw that something had happened which was to upset all existing naval concepts.

Of course there were some who discounted what had occurred, saying it had been due largely to the element of surprise. It is true that the defenders were less alert on that Sunday morning; yet it seemed likely that even if they had been alert they would not have been able to meet the attack effectively.

Some high-ranking officers wanted to go a long way in revising the entire basis on which the US navy was organized. They advanced the revolutionary idea that the navy, instead of being organized round the battleship with air power as one of its supports, should be based on air power with the battleship and other surface craft as supports. Unfortunately their views were not heeded.

Not heeded, that is, in *Washington*. For the critique at Pearl Harbour wasn't the only one held on the manoeuvres. The navy now knows that another took place soon after in Tokyo.

When the planes flew in for the mock attack, the highly efficient Japanese spy organization in Oahu had observers on all the high points of the island, each with a plausible reason for being there. There were watchers in the thick brush that borders the harbour. Small one-engined sampans "fished" off-shore. And there were listeners later in Honolulu wherever navy men gathered.

After intensive study in Tokyo, the information thus obtained formed the basis for a series of secret manoeuvres. We discovered

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later that the Japanese naval experts concluded—as had some US admirals—that the primary weapon of the modern navy is air power and that the striking force of a fleet should be built round its air arm rather than round its surface craft. And so, learning from the manoeuvres what American battleship admirals unfortunately refused to learn from them, the Japanese navy was basically reorganized.

The Japanese further realized that they had been presented with a brilliant and workable plan for putting the greater part of the United States Fleet out of commission. They carried out that plan on 7th December 1941.

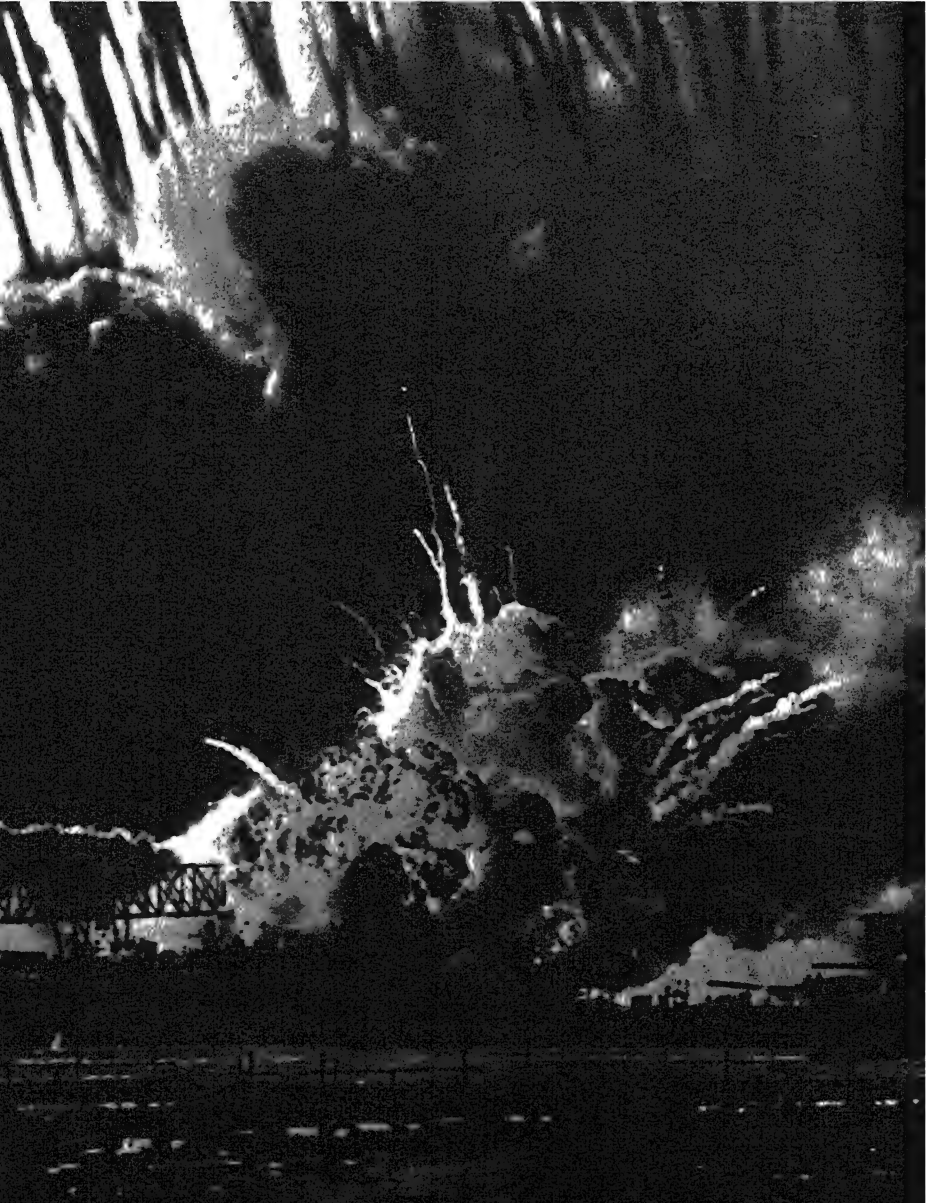
On 8th December officers who had flown the planes from the *Saratoga* and *Lexington* in 1932 read the details of the Japanese attack with bitter understanding. Yes—this, and this, and this—yes, that was exactly how it was done nine years ago.

In some ways the problem of the Japanese on 7th December was more difficult than that of the manoeuvres. Theoretically the defence was stronger. Great progress had been made in the development of devices for the detection of approaching aircraft. But, because of the lack of alertness of the defending forces, the Japanese planes were a complete surprise when they burst through the cloud wall over the Koolau Range.

In other ways the problem had been made easier. Planes were bunched conveniently on the airfields and were easily strafed. And nearly all the battleships in the Pacific Fleet were in the harbour.

The Japanese used about the same number of planes as Admiral Yarnell. Their losses were about the same as his theoretical losses. And so were their accomplishments.

The tragedy of Pearl Harbour tore up the old plans. For it happened that, while all the principal American battleships were in Pearl Harbour on 7th December, no carriers were there. *Of necessity*, then, the carrier replaced the battleship as the capital ship. The carrier task force automatically became the chief naval weapon. Almost at once the US Navy began to use it with great skill—at Coral Sea, Midway, Guadalcanal, Rabaul, the Marshalls and Truk.



Direct hit on the powder magazine of the destroyer *Shaw*. The American fleet suffered more damage in an hour than it had during the whole of the First World War

## **The Infamous Seventh of December**

*By Blake Clark*

I HAVE BEEN close to the horrors and glories of one of the most crucial battles in America's history. Its beginning was a calm, sunny Sunday morning in one of the most peaceful spots in the world. Its ending saw many American planes destroyed, ships disabled, oil burning on the water, men swimming in it, nearly 3,000 lives lost. "More damage in one hour than the US fleet suffered during the whole of the First World War."

I heard the rumbling noise of what I thought was coast artillery practice as we were eating our breakfast.

Yamato came running in from the kitchen. "Plenty plane outside!" he exclaimed.

From the back porch we could see a squadron of planes high above. Over Pearl Harbour we saw the sky dotted with black puffs of smoke.

"That's good," said Mr. Frear, with whom I lived. "We *ought* to get ready."

Then a neighbour rushed in.

"The Japanese are bombing Oahu!" she cried.

"Oh, no, it's only practice. Don't get excited," we said.

"If you don't believe it," she exclaimed, "turn on your radio and hear for yourselves!"

I did. "Keep calm, everybody. Oahu is under attack. This is no joke. The emblem of the Rising Sun has been seen on the wings of

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the attacking planes." I recognized the voice of Webley Edwards, the local radio station manager.

Just then a car turned into the drive and came to a quick stop. A woman in a Red Cross uniform ran up the steps. "Come on!" she shouted. "We need help!"

I spent that day with her Red Cross unit, evacuating civilians from attacked areas. With my own eyes I saw much of what had happened. In the days after, I talked with everyone I could: commanding officers and seamen, the wounded and the unhurt, the heroes and the anonymous workers whose collective response to duty was as important as the extraordinary feats of individuals. This is their story, plain and straightforward, as it was told to me.

PEARL HARBOUR, the United States' largest naval base, was the real objective, but before it could be attacked the Japanese had to disable the airfields which were an essential part of its defences. The army's Wheeler and Hickam airfields, the navy's air base at Kaneohe, and the marines' uncompleted air base at Ewa were all within quick flying time of the Harbour.

The Japanese tried to ground every available plane. They approached from two directions simultaneously. The method of attack on each airfield was the same. While low-flying planes dropped well-directed bombs on hangars, other planes sprayed the long, orderly rows of aircraft on the ground with incendiary bullets.

Typical of the surprise of the attack was the experience of the commanding officer at the naval air base. He was having his breakfast coffee. Hearing planes, he looked out of the window and saw three flights of three planes each, flying low and making a right turn into the entrance of the bay.

"Those fools know there is a strict rule against making a right turn!" the commander exclaimed, leaping to his feet.

His young son said, "Look, red circles on the wings!"

The first alarm was the screeching of the commander's car tyres coming downhill to the administration building.

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The mustard-yellow planes now flew low, one behind the other, no more than fifty feet above sea planes that lay anchored in the bay. A hundred yards away two boats of young seamen were passing each other, the crews of the anchored planes. The Japanese opened up. Machine-gun bullets made a wide lane of geysers that led straight to the boats and the anchored planes. The planes went up in flames. A few of the men escaped.

The Japanese flew to the end of the bay, made a loop and came back, heading straight for a line of bombers on the ramp and strafing them mercilessly. They came back again. Heedless of the strafers, gun crews rushed out to salvage machine-guns from the burning planes and set them up. Streams of fire converged upon the attackers. For fifteen or twenty minutes this strafing attack kept up, the line of planes going continuously up and down, crossing each time directly over the planes on the ramp.

During the lull which followed, men commandeered all available cars and drove them to staggered positions on the field so that if enemy planes tried to land they would crash on the cars. Civilian employees helped to put out fires and manned bulldozers to push burning planes away from the hangars.

Twenty minutes and the Japanese were back. They dropped a tremendous bomb on one hangar. They shot up the hurrying people on the ramp. One bullet went through a concrete wall at least a foot thick.

Everywhere the gallant fighters answered back, but the attackers were flying fast and were hard to hit. Two planes were brought down. The rest flew on towards the marine base at Ewa. Here the first wave concentrated fire on grounded aircraft. During the momentary lull which followed, marines rushed out and dragged unburnt planes off the runway, and mounted free machine-guns on them. The second attack was more vicious than the first. There was no protection; cannon and machine-gun fire churned the ground. Yet the men stuck to their guns, pouring a stream of fire at each Japanese plane as it dived past.

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Throughout the attack every man carried out his emergency duties. The marines distributed the ammunition, cleaned and serviced the guns, and got in telling shots at the enemy. Moving vehicles were special targets of attack, yet drivers of ammunition trucks and ambulances made their trips to every part of the field without looking first to see if the sky was clear. Usually it was not.

The marines had a one-man fire engine. In the midst of the first attack, driver Shaw climbed into his seat and set out for a line of burning planes. Strafers attacked the bright red engine before it got half-way to the planes. Shaw did not stop until a third wave shot the tyres off his wheels.

LIEUTENANTS Welch and Taylor, sitting in the officers' club at Wheeler Field, saw dive bombers swoop low over the ammunition hangar and drop their load. The lieutenants hurried outside, jumped into their car and rushed to their planes. They did not stop to hear the size or number of planes attacking, but took off and headed straight for a squadron of a dozen or more of the Japanese bombers flying over Barber's Point. They accounted for three of the enemy planes before they had to return for refuelling.

One of Welch's three machine-guns jammed, and Taylor was wounded in the arm and leg. Before Welch's gun could be unlocked or Taylor's wound receive first aid, a second wave of fifteen Japanese planes swept in. Taylor had been advised not to return to the air because of his wounds, but he and Welch took off immediately in pursuit.

The Japanese were soon on Taylor's tail. Welch, behind them, dived on the one most dangerous to his partner. The Japanese rear gunner poured rounds into Welch's plane; bullets struck the engine, the propeller, the cowling. Still Welch pursued like an avenging fury, letting fly with his two remaining guns. The enemy plane burst into flames and crashed. Taylor escaped. Welch followed another plane seaward, caught it five miles off-shore and gave its two-man crew an ocean grave.

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These fighters were not alone. An old-timer, Lieutenant Sanders, led a unit of four planes up through an overcast of 6,000 feet. He saw a group of six Japanese bombing an airfield and signalled his men to attack. The Japanese saw them and fled. The unit came in fast. Sanders opened up on the leader. The Japanese plane smoked up, faltered, and fell into the sea.

Lieutenant James Sterling was hot after one of the enemy. A Japanese plane was on his tail. Sanders closed in, but the attacker was already pouring bullets into Sterling's plane, and it burst into flames. The American continued to fight the Japanese plane ahead, and they all went into a dive—the Japanese in front, Sterling still firing at him, the second Japanese after Sterling, and Sanders following through. Down they plunged. Only Sanders pulled out of the dive.

In the pineapple fields of Wahiawa, thousands of people watched a dog-fight between Lieutenant Rasmussen and a Japanese. Rasmussen pulled up out of a dive and caught the enemy plane in his sights. Tracer bullets ripped into it. The anxious thousands broke into a resounding cheer when the Japanese plane fell in flames to the ground.

When Rasmussen landed, he found that his rudder had been shot away, his radio equipment pulverized, and the fuselage was as full of holes as a sieve.

THE FIRST WAVE of bombers to arrive over Hickam Field chose as its objective the quarter-mile row of planes drawn up in front of the hangars in orderly formation. Ignoring the merciless strafing, the men at Hickam worked furiously to disperse the planes. Some faltered and fell, but others took their places. While the fire brigade fought flames at the tail of some planes, daring ground-crew jumped on to the wings, unfastened the heavy engines, and pulled them to the edge of the apron. Many fine engines, later to be of vital importance, were saved by their quick thinking.

In the second and most destructive raid, two rows of high-flying



bombers dropped heavy demolition bombs directly on the most populous section of Hickam Field. For what seemed a full minute after the bombs had landed nothing happened. Then the mess hall, the guard-house, the fire station, the huge barracks, and an immense hangar all seemed to rise intact from the ground, poise in mid-air, and drop back to the earth in fragments.

The third wave came strafing. Now ground defences were going full blast and accounted for several raiders. Inexperienced men acted like veterans, time and again dashing out under fire and taking over machine-guns whose operators had just been killed.

Two Japanese boys at work on a defence project when the attack began saw a machine-gunner having trouble setting up his gun. They helped him anchor it and fed ammunition while he fired. They loaded so fast that they had to be given emergency treatment for burns. When a Japanese plane fell near them they cut the insignia off the pilot's shoulders for souvenirs.

On the apron opposite the hangars one man kept up a steady stream of fire from a machine-gun which he had set up in the nose of a bomber. An enemy plane turned the bomber into a flaming death trap. The gunner did not even try to get out. Long after the leaping flames had enveloped the nose of the plane, spectators saw the red tracer bullets from his machine-gun mounting skyward.

THE JAPANESE also found time to do a bit of incidental strafing and bombing of civilians. They riddled cars along the roadways, killing and wounding their passengers. They blew the tyres off the car of a major who was returning with his wife and children from church.

At Pearl Harbour a sailor's wife saw the attack and sent her daughter to bring her small son indoors. The girl ran down the path to where her little brother was playing with a small wooden wagon. As they started back to the house, a plane flew low above them and spattered the path with machine-gun bullets. The little wagon flew to pieces on the lawn.

Along Alewa Heights we saw children grouped round a man

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who held in his arms the limp body of a young girl. The family of five had been standing on the doorstep when a bomb fell. A piece of shrapnel had flown straight to his daughter's heart.

ALL THAT happened at the airfields was only a prelude. The attack on Pearl Harbour itself lasted from 7.55 a.m. to 9.15 a.m. There were probably 150 Japanese planes—torpedo-carriers, strafers, dive bombers, and high-altitude bombers. In the spacious waters were battleships, cruisers, destroyers, mine-layers—a large part of the US Navy. Every Japanese plane seemed to have its objective selected in advance, for they separated and each went to attack a specific warship.

Horizontal bombers, flying at about 12,000 feet, dropped armour-piercing bombs almost simultaneously on the battleship *Arizona*. One sped straight down the funnel and blew up the ship's forward magazine. Instantly torpedoes joined the bombs and the forward part of the ship blew up. Bodies flew 300 feet into the air, hurled about as tiny particles are whisked aloft in a fire. The after-part of the ship shook as if it would fall apart like a stack of cards. There was a great swishing sound as fire and smoke pushed up through the seams of the deck.

Twenty men were caught in a turret. A hot blast enveloped them. They felt a pressure on their ear-drums. Nauseating gas and smoke smothered them. There was confusion and danger of panic, but at one command, "Quiet," not a word was spoken. A seaman produced a torch, and they found their way through the thick smoke to the ladder. The man sent to open the hatch took a long time. The men waited quietly in the heavy smoke.

When the hatch was opened they burst out upon an amazing sight. The whole of the forward part of the ship was a mass of flames and shattered, twisted metal. Bodies lay thick on the deck. Men were running out of the fire, falling on the deck, and jumping over the side. Above, Japanese planes were flying low over the ship, strafing the fleeing seamen.

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Out of the chaos the men heard a voice of calm reassurance.

"Take it easy. Don't get excited. Leave the ship for Ford Island."

It was the one surviving officer. He went into the flames. Many who came out with him were so badly burnt that they were barely able to stand. They stumbled along, feeling their way, helpless, yet not one man gave way to panic.

The officer worked swiftly, surely, and took no shelter from the Japanese, who continued their strafing. Many of the wounded and some of those unhurt would have failed to get off the burning ship had it not been for this officer's courage. Men took heart from his calmness, forgot about themselves, and turned to help others escape.

"When are you leaving, sir?" someone asked him.

"Not until the Japs leave!" he answered through the flames.

When the last boat pulled away with the final load of wounded, he leaped overboard and swam ashore.

ALL OVER the harbour men were leaping from decks and portholes of burning ships, sliding down the hulls as boats capsized. But hundreds were caught in their compartments. On one ship which was turning on its side, a young chaplain was standing by a porthole, helping men through. When his turn came it was too late. "Go ahead, boys. I'm all right!" were his last words.

On another badly listing ship, many were overcome by fumes from the fuel-oil mixed with ether from the medical supply room, which had been hit. Another tremendous bomb landed. The concussion sent every loose thing on the ship flying. A boy was climbing an outside ladder at that moment. The concussion blew his body through the iron rungs, cutting it into as many pieces as the sections he covered.

On the same ship, while the universe seemed to be exploding round him, a negro mess attendant, who had never before fired a gun, manned a machine-gun on the bridge until his ammunition was exhausted.

The attackers did not get off unscathed. One destroyer had just

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downed four planes when its chief radio operator got a good contact on his listening apparatus. "Submarine!" They manoeuvred for the attack and dropped two depth charges; then two more. A large oil-slick appeared and bubbles covered the sea for 200 feet.

Suddenly another contact was reported, apparently a submarine heading for a cruiser near by. The destroyer made an emergency turn and loosened another pair of depth charges; another oil-slick. They had sunk a second submarine.

Officers and men everywhere worked together and set each other inspiring examples. An ensign on one ship organized a party of volunteers to go below to the ammunition supply room, which was blocked by fire. They worked swiftly and silently, in constant danger of being blown to bits, carrying ammunition through the fire, supplying the ship's batteries. A bomb exploded and flying shrapnel mortally wounded the ensign. His men wanted to carry him above, but he ordered them to abandon him.

"It's too late to save me," he said. "Go ahead and save yourselves!" He died at his post.

All available arms were put into use. A country lad had a standard rifle shoved into his hand.

"Get out and shoot!" was the command.

The boy had not been trained to handle a heavy rifle, but he had "done lots of huntin' " in his day. He aimed at a small dive bomber coming in, and fired. One of the freak accidents of the war occurred. Apparently his bullet hit the detonator of the bomb the Japanese was about to drop, for the plane burst in mid-air. The boy fainted.

On one ship a chaplain robed in ecclesiastical gown was setting up his reader's stand for the morning service. At the attack he dashed to the door where they were dealing out arms, and grabbed a machine-gun. Using his stand for a prop, he fired away.

WE LEARNED in Honolulu that day how narrow the dividing line is between the soldier and the civilian in wartime. Soon after the bombing started, a call came in to the headquarters of the Hawaii

A new explosion,  
filling the sky with  
smoke and flame,  
illuminates the  
burnt-out and  
damaged aircraft  
littering the naval  
air station at  
Pearl Harbour



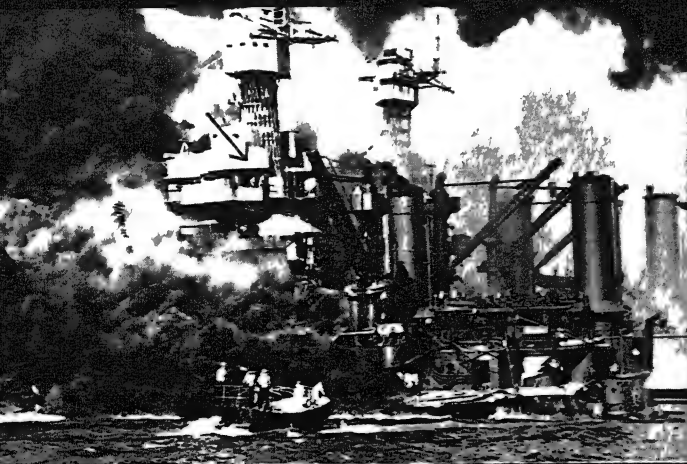
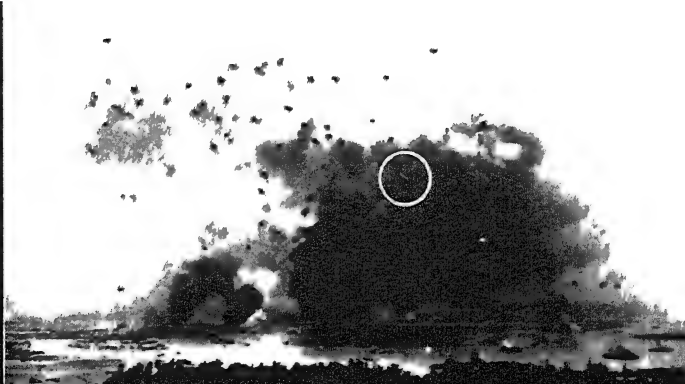
The battleship  
*Arizona*, her back  
broken, keels over  
as she settles  
in the water



Men scramble  
overboard as the  
battleship *California*  
sinks from bomb  
and torpedo  
damage. Only a  
small area of her  
sister ship *Oklahoma*  
still shows above  
the water (circled)



Destroyers (foreground) keep up a flak barrage against a Japanese dive-bomber (circled), attacking through the smoke of the stricken *Arizona*



High in the superstructure two men (arrowed) are surrounded by the fires of the 31,800 ton *West Virginia*. Below them a small boat rescues another seaman from the water

A capsized mine-layer lies in calm water as fires rage aboard the cruiser *Helena* (left) which was hit by an aerial torpedo. In a dry dock (arrowed) smoke pours from the destroyer *Shaw*



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Medical Association. It just said, "Pearl Harbour! Ambulances! For God's sake, hurry!"

Within twenty minutes, doctors and volunteer workers had stripped the insides of over 100 delivery trucks of every description, equipped them neatly with previously prepared stretcher frames, and were speeding to the scene of action.

Women of the Motor Corps were carrying men in every available car to Pearl Harbour. The three-lane road was an inferno. Army trucks, official and unofficial emergency wagons, ambulances, Red Cross cars and hundreds of taxis rushing officers and men to their battle stations screamed up and down the six-mile road. The Motor Corps women were equal to the task.

The wounded were taken to Tripler Hospital. One bomb had made a direct hit on a mess hall while three or four hundred airmen were having breakfast. Maimed and bleeding, they poured into Tripler. Surgeon King put in an emergency call to the doctors of Honolulu: "Surgical teams, quick!"

Then occurred one of life's breath-taking coincidences. At that very moment virtually every surgeon in Honolulu was listening to a lecture on war-surgery delivered by Dr. John Moorhead of New York. The audience departed in a body for Tripler.

By another coincidence, Dr. Moorhead had been demonstrating a new surgical instrument which located metal in the body. The instrument had its baptism of fire that morning, saving many precious hours that would otherwise have been spent waiting for X-rays to be developed.

Dr. Pinkerton, making his rounds at Queen's Hospital, heard a commotion below in the emergency ward. Dozens of cars were bringing in wounded civilians, mutilated, burnt. As the doctor rushed to give instructions, a call came from Tripler Hospital.

"Blood plasma, quick!"

In five minutes Dr. Pinkerton was at the refrigeration plant of the Hawaiian Electric Company where the local blood bank was stored. There were 210 flasks of 250 cc. (half a pint) each. He left

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sixty of these at Queen's emergency ward for the civilian cases and sped on to Tripler with the rest.

The call came from Pearl Harbour: "Plasma!"

The precious fluid was again divided and part hurried to the surgeons at the Harbour. It was going fast.

At eleven o'clock Dr. Pinkerton made a short appeal over the radio. In half an hour 500 people were waiting at the doors of the hospital. The staff of trained technicians worked at twelve tables but could not take the blood as fast as it was offered. Some donors stood in line for seven hours. Japanese by the hundreds registered silent protest with their blood.

Entire families came. The age limits were eighteen to fifty, but young boys lied and old men asserted their right to be included.

Many donors came back to give more. One second-class seaman was recognized.

"You shouldn't come back so soon," a nurse warned him.

"My brother was killed," he said. "I want to do something."

That's what everyone in Hawaii was saying that nightmarish day. "I want to do something."

CONVALESCENTS in the Naval Hospital were hastily evacuated to temporary quarters outside to make room for the injured, streaming in on stretchers. Numbers of young seamen had lost arms or legs, hundreds were burnt. The spirit of these boys was unbelievable. The most impressive fact about the hospital, filled with wounded, many suffering unto death, was the silence. No confusion, no crying out. You never heard screams—instead, "Watch that leg, please, ma'am. It's broken in two places."

In one hour boys had become men, and men heroes. The medical officer walked down a row of wounded to select the ones to receive immediate treatment. His trained eye at once saw the worst case. Burnt skin was dripping off a young boy's entire upper body.

"Take care of my buddy, here, Doc," the boy said. "He's hurt lots worse than I am."



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That sentence was spoken more often than any other throughout the day—"Take care of my buddy."

EACH AFTERNOON for days Pearl Harbour's 3,000 heroic dead were buried, simply and with dignity, without crowds of on-lookers. On each grave was a bouquet of flowers. A row of tight-lipped khaki-clad marines, their eyes fixed on the distant hills, stepped forward, raised their rifles, and fired three volleys. A bugler sounded The Last Post. The clear notes of the bugle echoed through the quiet valley, a valley of legend and song, where happy people had lived in peace and freedom for over a hundred years.

On New Year's Day, Honolulu paid its respects to the dead in a memorial service. Hundreds of people attended, each wearing a Hawaiian flower garland in honour of the dead. They gathered round the long, wide trenches in which rows of men who had fought side by side now lay side by side, each in his own coffin. Six Hawaiian girls sang the slow, sweet strains of *Aloha Oe*.

Fleet Chaplain Macguire spoke in a firm voice:

"Let no one think they died in vain. They manned their guns until the decks buckled under them from the heat. Not a whimper. Not a moan.

"It was glorious!

"Don't say we buried our dead with sorrow. They died manfully. They were buried manfully. And we will avenge their deaths, come what may!"

*Condensed from "Pearl Harbour," published by The Bodley Head, London*

## **The Password Was MANDALAY**

*By Lieutenant-Colonel James Warner Bellah*

SEVEN MONTHS of back-breaking, mind-searing work ended that last morning. Only hours were left—slow hours until take-off. Jerry Dunn kept talking about death and I kept shutting him up. He'd smile and say: "If you talk about it, it won't happen."

There were two open spaces on the map, open spaces ringed with jungle and mountain. Nobody had been on the ground at either place—but there were photographs. The troop-carrying gliders would start down into those places shortly; they had to be taken and held at all costs, because the gliders couldn't go back.

You would hit the ground and go into action, and behind you in wave after wave would come British troops and American engineers and bulldozers and graders and mules to build an airfield between dawn and dusk, so that the next night troop-carrying aircraft could land the army.

At our base there were voices from London and Liverpool, Brooklyn and Carolina, Texas and Nepal. But suddenly nobody seemed to have any nationality. Phil Cochran must have felt that loss of all the non-essentials of life. He closed the briefing with, "Tonight you're going to find out you've got a soul. Nothing you've ever done counts now. Only the next few hours. Good luck."

Dunn and I lay on the ground in the shade of a glider wing. We were to be first wave. Dunn talked about his wife in London. Every now and then as he talked the whole thing would surge up inside

me like a dental appointment when I was a lad. The time drew on. "See you," Dunn said and walked back to his glider.

John Alison came running over—he was a fighter pilot but on this flight he was Cochran's second-in-command with the job of making an airfield out of a jungle clearing in twelve hours. He got in; co-pilot Doc Tulloch and I climbed aboard and the detachment filed in behind us. Everyone was in full field kit and armed to the teeth with rifles, tommy guns, knives and grenades—a pirate crew, Wingate's army and Cochran's air commandos, in mottled camouflage suits, with broad-brimmed, rakish, paint-dabbed jungle hats.

There was no babbling to quieten screaming nerves, no bravado—for this was no quickly cooked-up raid. This was an army, filling the great gliders behind us—a force in heavy strength with hundreds of miles of night flying ahead of us over trackless jungle and jagged mountains—and over a formidable Japanese force.

The gliders were towed in pairs on long ropes. Seese was flying the left glider in our tow, with Brigadier "Mad Mike" Calvert and most of one of the Brigade staffs aboard. We came up over the trees fighting to get height for the mountains in our path. We settled to the long flying hours ahead—long, cramped, smokeless hours with God-knew-what at the end of them.

Soon all we could see was the blue blob of exhaust from the tug's starboard motor. All we could feel was the breathing of tightly packed men and the animal shudder of the glider as it swung into the propeller wash and out again, weaving on its long snaking tow rope. All we could hear was the thundering noise of our thrust through the air, for towed gliders are as noisy as powered planes.

We were alone as far as we could see, but we knew that the rest of the wave was behind us. Now we were at 8,500 feet and across the frontier into Burma, with the mountains behind us. If the Japanese had even one good night fighter pilot we could all be done in like sitting birds, for we were sneaking in without fighter cover and in unarmed planes—counting entirely on audacity and surprise.

The moon was bright and high over Burma. We crossed the

Irrawaddy River and passed within a few miles of a Japanese airfield. We plastered our faces to the windows watching for tracers or pursuing fighters. But they let us through that bottleneck—they must have thought us a night bombing mission.

"Target in twenty minutes." We broke from our tight-packed, cramp-locked huddles. Bolts snicked sharply as rounds of ammunition snapped into chambers. Men got their packs adjusted—heavy jungle packs that would supply us if we had to get out on foot.

Ahead, the tug banked lazily and suddenly John Alison called out, "They've got the smudges lit!" The first glider was already down, then. Half-way round in the banking turn, Alison hit the tow-release at 1,000 feet and we were gliding free. We were off—in complete darkness into a blind clearing at better than 100 miles an hour, howling down the night wind, deep in the heart of enemy territory—with little John Alison fighting the controls.

Trees—and we were over them! A long flat shadowland ahead and we levelled off, sank towards it, struck it and bounced. The skids tore into the dust and suddenly we had stopped. The doors flew open; the security party was off on the run, fanning out towards the jungle that could have burst into enemy fire.

"Gliders!"

Another tug was over us with its gliders cut off. You could see them over the distant trees, losing altitude fast, diving towards us—one of them with death reaching for it. Before it quite cleared the trees there was a splintering, crushing thunderclap echoing through the night and the glider was gone.

We started running towards the sound of the crash, passing the word back for the doctor. We cut part way into the tangled growth and called—but no answer came back. Not a sound but the roar of more motors overhead and the slicing sigh of two more gliders cut free—and again two—until the air seemed full of them.

The word was passed that buffalo wallows and a log or two had taken wheels off some of the landed gliders—all hands man-handled them and cleared the landing space. But a big glider with one

wheel off and skids dug in was a damned thing to move. Fifty men strained at the wreck but she didn't budge.

"Gliders!"

Two more were howling down over the trees towards the congestion. One saw it in time, zoomed with the last of its speed and ploughed in safety just beyond. But the other crashed head-on and welded two gliders into a ball of scrap. Screams tore the night and the wrecker crew clawed into the wreckage with bare hands to get at the injured. A doctor was already inside doing something under torchlight, after his morphine had stilled the screaming.

There was a quiet North Country voice in there, "Don't move me—this is where I landed—and this is where I die."

John Alison was rerigging the lights to give the second wave of gliders a runway to come in on that would avoid the wrecked gliders. Indefatigable John, tearing all over the place.

Brigadier Calvert had his command post set up in the jungle edge and his security patrols out. One distant shot, but no enemy as yet. Doc Tulloch's dressing station began to fill up. Men hobbled in singly or were carried in on stretchers. There was no sound from them. There seldom is after the first shocked screams.

Again the roar of aircraft filled the night skies—and again the gliders swooped in two by two. One with a bulldozer aboard missed the strip in the darkness and dived headlong between two trees taking off both wings and howling onward into the clear. The bulldozer was torn loose inside. It slammed forward unhinging the nose, heaving pilot and co-pilot into the air, ricocheting out under them and letting the two men drop back unhurt.

With the first light, the bulldozers began to growl and the sappers were at it to make an airport for powered planes—grading and filling, levelling off hummocks, cutting the rank buffalo grass, hauling disabled gliders under the trees.

A captain hobbled in on a broken foot. He had found his way in from a deep jungle crash with his sergeant—both of them dazed. Two men were alive, they said, so Doc Tulloch got the position

and with stretcher-bearers he started to make his way in to them. Late in the forenoon they came back. Alone. The captain had been too dazed to keep his directions straight.

Brigadier Calvert roughed in the casualty list, and it was amazingly small for what it had purchased. In another six hours thousands of troops would pour in to this airport that these first-wave men had died to secure.

There was the hum of light motors in the sky and over the tree-tops came a formation of tiny planes—come to take out the injured. We got one to cruise over the jungle and locate Doc's crash, and after an hour we found them. Two men had survived and we got them out. Jerry Dunn was in there with the rest—to stay. He had been wrong. When you have an appointment with death, you will keep it, whether you talk or not.

The engineers toiled on throughout the long, steaming afternoon lengthening the air-strip. These sappers—with shovels and machine-guns, and the toughest jobs in war—have the holy fires of something in their souls, something only a sapper can understand.

The sun was sinking to the tree-tops and the shadows were pooling deep across the clearing—that clearing so far in enemy territory that when you looked at it on a map you couldn't quite believe you were there. But you were. And it was no longer deep in enemy territory; it belonged to us. It was an airfield, test-lighted for the troop-carrying planes. A wrecked glider was the control tower, and John Alison was ready in it with his control radio.

There was a motor roar far up in the evening sky. The first of the troop ships. They came in and circled for Alison's landing beam and got it, roaring down to disgorge the army. They came in so fast that you lost count, and the figure was unbelievable—it still is if you look it up in the official records.

General Wingate's Army. Phil Cochran and his men flew it over the mountains in the bright moonlight and put it down deep in the heart of Japanese-held Burma—and the password was Mandalay.

*Condensed from US Air Services*

## **Secret Mission to North Africa**

*By Frederick Painton*

IN HIS London headquarters General Dwight Eisenhower stared at the cable marked "*Most secret*" that had just been handed to him. In essence, it said this: *A group of pro-Allied Vichy French officers in Algeria, with information about Axis plans to take over the country, suggested that five officers from General Eisenhower's staff come secretly and at once to a rendezvous near Algiers to discuss the situation.*

The General reflected. The Allies had plans for their own invasion of the area; on "D-Day" at "H-Hour" (8th November 1942, at 1.00 a.m.) British and American troops would make amphibious landings in North Africa. A secret rendezvous with the French could gain information that might save many lives among the youngsters even now beginning to file aboard transports. But there was a terrible risk involved. The secret mission might be discovered, thus warning both the Vichy High Command and the Nazis of what was afoot. In that case the great operation might end in horrible disaster.

General Eisenhower turned to the man across the desk—six-foot-three Major-General Mark Wayne Clark, his Deputy Commander.

"I think you can do it, Wayne," he said quietly.

The decision made, Eisenhower and Clark went at once to 10 Downing Street. Over lunch, Winston Churchill heard the plan and welcomed it. It was an adventure after his own heart, one he might well have gloriously lived himself half a century earlier.

"Done," he said. "You'll have our fullest co-operation."

Whereupon Clark hastily departed to hand-pick the four men to go with him: Captain Jerauld Wright of the US Navy, a crack shot; Colonel Julius Holmes, who spoke French and knew Algeria; Colonel Arch Hamblen, an expert on shipping problems; and Brigadier-General Lyman Lemnitzer\* of G-3, the operations branch of the US Army.

Each was instructed: "Leave your office as if you would be away no more than an hour. Take what a haversack will carry. No papers of any kind. We leave tonight."

Besides the haversacks they carried Garand-type rifles, tommy guns and a small quantity of gold—about £120—to be used in case of trouble. At 7.30 a.m., on 18th October, two big planes roared into the air. The historic mission had started.

Meanwhile, coded cables had flashed orders to a British naval base to provide a submarine and four kayaks—small boats made of wood and canvas, which would be used to put the passengers ashore. The Commandos contributed the services of three officers who were expert in this kind of business: Captains G. B. (Jumbo) Courtney and R. P. Livingston, and Lieutenant J. P. Foote.

Late in the afternoon Clark's party arrived at the base. An RN captain listened attentively as the scheme was outlined. Then he said bluntly: "It's very dangerous. We can put ashore, no trouble there. But the kayaks are cockleshells. If a sea springs up you can't launch them, can't get away."

Clark nodded. It was a risk he had considered and accepted.

The captain continued: "General, this sounds like a secret service thriller where the hero goes to a haunted farm-house that shows a light at midnight."

Clark grinned. "How the devil did you know that?" For a farm-house *was* to show a light if the coast was clear to land.

The moon was rising as the five Americans and the three British

\*General Lemnitzer was appointed Supreme Commander Allied Forces Europe in 1962.



Commandos, led by the submarine's commander, Lieutenant N. L. A. Jewell, boarded a little 750-ton submarine. With them they took blue signalling lamps—which would not throw beams observable from the side—to signal in Morse code after they landed, and a small "walkie-talkie" set which they could use to communicate with the submarine, secure in the knowledge that the Germans could not pick up what was said. The diesels rumbled and the submarine got under way.

AT 4 a.m. on the second night they sighted the rendezvous signal light on the African shore. But it was too close to dawn to risk a landing. They submerged again to wait for evening. Through the periscope Clark could see the old Moorish-type farm-house, perched on the edge of an abrupt slope. Behind the farm-house was the main road to Algiers. They could see no sign of life anywhere.

Colonel Holmes studied the scene with mixed emotions. "The last time I saw that road," he remarked, "was when my wife and I drove along it on our honeymoon."

For fifteen hours the tiny submarine remained below the surface. The air became so foul that a struck match would not ignite. The men found themselves gasping and gulping. Their heads pounded; the slightest exertion brought utter fatigue. But when night fell at last, the submarine surfaced. The men climbed to the conning tower, the night air clearing their heads, and waited for the signal light to gleam again.

Eight o'clock came, then nine o'clock. The farm-house remained dark. A great many praying words were used in an unprayerful way. Would they have to take twenty-four hours more of this mechanized sewer pipe? Lemnitzer groaned. "Something's happened. There'll be no light."

At 11.10 he was proved wrong; the light came on.

The crew got the kayaks through the torpedo hatch and launched them. Keeping close together, the party headed for shore through surf that drenched them with chill spray. Some 500 yards from the beach they stopped. Suppose the Vichy-controlled police had been

warned and were lurking in the bushes ashore? Were they about to walk into a trap? Somebody had to go first and make sure.

Julius Holmes spoke French the best, and knew some of the people ashore, so he and Commando Captain Livingston headed in. If all was clear, the others would follow. Ten minutes later Holmes's boat grated on the gravel. Rifles ready, the two men got out and moved cautiously along the beach.

Suddenly they heard someone moving in the brush. They whirled, guns levelled. A voice said in English, "Who's there?"

"Who're you?" asked Holmes.

"I'm Ridgeway Knight."

Ridgeway Knight was an American vice-consul who had taken part in the arrangements for the rendezvous.

"I'm Julius Holmes. Where's Bob Murphy?"

(Murphy, the American Consul-General in North Africa, had been instrumental in bringing about the meeting.)

"He'll be along in a minute. Everything's OK."

Holmes turned to Livingston. "Make the signal."

Livingston blinked his blue lamp seaward. The signals were, "K" for "korrekt" if all was well; "F" for "foney" if there was trouble. He made the "K" signal in Morse, and presently the other kayaks came out of the night and the other six men stepped ashore. Then the signal "All's well" was made to the submarine, and its diesel drone died away as it stood off-shore.

To hide the boats, the wet shivering men hauled them up to the farm-house and piled them in the kitchen. They then peeled off their clothes, spread them out to dry, and after a meal, dozed until the French party arrived at seven o'clock and the conference began.

The information obtained was priceless. It included the tonnage capacity of the ports of Casablanca, Algiers, Oran and Tunis; the French Navy's plans for preventing a landing; a list of the places where French Army resistance would be tough, and where it would be only token. Special information on airport runways later proved to be of inestimable value.

The sun climbed the sky and started down, and still the men talked, and calculated, and marked the maps.

But General Clark's luck was running out at last. Jerry Wright heard a sound that quickly brought him out of the house. The wind was whistling round the house's red-tiled roof. Waves as tall as a man were roaring against the shore. Wright knew that no kayak could ever be launched in that sea. He went gloomily back inside.

Meanwhile, two Arab servants, who had that morning been dismissed by the owner of the farm-house for safety's sake, had gone to a near-by town and visited the Commissioner of Police. They reported that they had seen strange men carry big bundles (the boats) to the farm-house. The place had once been a smuggler's hideout; perhaps it was being thus used again. So a police car was soon humming along the road towards the rendezvous. . . .

THE SUN dropped into the sea and lights behind the shaded farm-house windows lit up the conference room. The discussions had about reached an end. Only one point remained.

One of the French officers said, "It will be necessary to have some leader here whom we will all follow. I suggest General Henri Honoré Giraud."

"But he's in France," objected Clark, "practically a prisoner."

"He must be rescued and brought here. He is the only officer who can gain the loyalty of the many conflicting factions."

Clark agreed, and promised that Giraud should be rescued and brought to North Africa.\*

Then, in the next room, the telephone jangled. The men jerked erect, looked at each other. The house owner answered the call, and a moment later came rushing into the conference room, his eyes wide with fright. "The police! They'll be here in five minutes!"

Most of the French officers—the top ones—hurried out. To be discovered here in these circumstances meant being shot for treason. Engines roared, gears clashed, and they were gone.

\* See "Giraud's Brilliant Escape from a Nazi Prison," p. 125

Clark's men hastily stuffed maps and papers inside their shirts. They were trapped between the Vichy police and the stormy sea. And now the police car roared up, its lights gleaming against the white walls of the farm-house. Where could they hide?

Clark was all for taking literally to the woods. Murphy objected; if the police got suspicious and made a search, the Americans were bound to be discovered. "There's an empty wine cellar," said Murphy. "You go down there. I'll get rid of the police."

Clark didn't like it: a cellar seemed like a rat-trap—no room to manoeuvre. But there was now no time for anything else. They could hear the gendarmes piling out of their car. Gripping rifles and tommy guns, the eight officers filed down into the wine cellar. Murphy pulled the doors down flat, put boxes over them, then turned to meet the police.

He had one stratagem that might work. The conference table was littered with half-empty wine bottles and cigarette stubs. Two French lieutenants in civilian clothes took their lives in their hands by pretending to be having a drunken party with Murphy and Knight. They began singing snatches of drinking songs; laughing and talking loudly. That was the scene the Commissioner of Police walked in upon a moment later.

Down in the cellar—it was only ten feet square—Clark disposed his party behind the stairs and along the walls so that casual observation from above might not discover them. But if the police did come down to take a look, then what? General Clark's whispered orders were blunt: his men were to shoot to kill. Upstairs the situation rapidly worsened. They could hear Bob Murphy arguing with the Commissioner. He and a few friends, Murphy protested, were having a little party. Since when was that a crime? But the voices were coming closer, until they seemed at the very cellar door.

And now the tense silence in the cellar was broken by choking gasps. Jumbo Courtney was trying to suppress a fit of coughing. The strangling sounds seemed to his companions loud enough to be heard in Algiers. Jumbo struggled desperately.

"By George!" he gasped. "I'm afraid I'll choke."

"I'm afraid you won't!" said Clark, grimly. "But chew this."

Jumbo fumbled for the gum, chewed desperately. The spasm passed. Silence settled on the cellar. The men could hear their own hearts thudding.

Above, Murphy was still arguing vociferously. Snatches of drunken song came from the gallant French lieutenants. A minute took a century to pass.

And then the voices upstairs changed tone. The Commissioner of Police was not so brusque. Holmes heaved a sigh. "Bob's got him," he whispered.

The Commissioner had decided there was no smuggling going on. Nevertheless, he said, he'd have to report to his superior. And, yes, without a doubt his superior would return to look into the matter further.

Just then Jumbo started to have another spasm of coughing.

"Chew that gum," Clark whispered tensely.

"I am, sir, but all the sweetness has gone out of it."

"I don't wonder," whispered Clark. "I chewed it for an hour before I gave it to you." This was considered very funny—later.

At last, however, the footsteps faded away, and they heard the police car leave. Clark and his party ascended, anxious to get to the submarine quickly. But the surf still pounded on the beach. Jerry Wright said, "I'd hate to have to launch a whaleboat in that sea."

Yet the mission was now a success—if they could only get away with the information. Clark said: "We'll try it."

A radio message was sent to the submarine: "Stand in as close as possible. We're in trouble and will embark immediately."

They carried the kayaks down to the wind-swept beach. It took a bold man even to consider going into that roaring sea with a fragile craft hardly bigger than a child's toy-boat. Clark stripped to his underclothes and, carrying his outer garments, walked out into the breakers with Livingston. They managed to get into the heaving little boat, and drove their paddles deep. Then a huge wall of water

broke over them, the kayak up-ended, and Clark and Livingston vanished into a white fury of foam.

A moment later, battered, turned end-over-end by the undertow, they came rolling along the beach, full of sand, salt water and artistic profanity. The others retrieved the kayak, but the paddles and the General's clothing were being swirled away.

Somebody yelled, "Get his trousers!"

Wright shouted, "To hell with his trousers. Get those paddles!"

They got the paddles.

Even Clark was forced to admit that they couldn't launch a boat that night. And he realized that they might be stranded here for days if the wind continued. But he refused to return to the cellar, police or no police. They would take to the woods where a man had a chance to shoot his way out.

So they hid themselves and the kayaks among the palms, shivering men in underwear, bitterly cold. The next day High Command officers did sentry-duty in their underpants. The wind continued unabated, preventing escape.

The police returned at eleven o'clock that night. The group in the woods, guns ready, hid tightly. Murphy greeted the police again, smiling his charming smile, talking rapidly and smoothly. In the end the police did not search the woods. They were not satisfied; they said they would return in the morning; but for the moment they were staved off.

BY 4 A.M. the wind seemed to have lessened somewhat, though the seas were still mountainous.

"We'll try it again," said Clark. His radio message to the submarine this time was imperative: "Stand in as close as possible."

Jumbo, Knight and the two French lieutenants steadied the first kayak. Clark and Wright climbed in. Cautiously the four walked the frail craft out into the pounding surf until Wright saw a comparatively smooth stretch. "Now!" he yelled.

The four men heaved the boat forward, Clark and Wright

paddled with all their strength. The light kayak climbed the side of an oncoming wave, hung for an endless space almost perpendicular—then suddenly went over the hooked crest and cleared the surf.

Captain Wright, steering for the submarine, swore hoarsely. "By God, thirty years in the navy and what happens? I wind up in command of a kayak!"

Meanwhile the others were trying to float their boats. General Lemnitzer and Lieutenant Foote used the same four-man system of launching, but their kayak capsized almost at once. Men and boat were hauled ashore. They tried again, and this time got clear.

Holmes and Livingston got off without accident, but Arch Hamblen and Jumbo Courtney overturned on their first attempt. They were the last to reach the submarine, and just as they did so a gigantic wave caught their kayak, lifted it high and swept it down upon the submarine. Crew members snatched the men clear and held them while the water poured in a torrent off the submarine's back. The wave broke the kayak in two and swept it away.

The danger was instantly apparent. A broken boat ashore with its contents scattered along the beach—it had contained letters, uniforms and a haversack holding the gold—would be a complete betrayal of the visitors' presence. They flashed Murphy a warning to clear the beach of all debris.

Murphy, Knight and the two French lieutenants searched the beach early in the morning and destroyed the debris.

The submarine turned her bow north at a painful four knots. Clark, anxious to get his information to London as soon as possible, decided to risk breaking radio silence. He sent a message to the nearest British base, giving his course, speed and position, and asking that a plane be sent out.

At 3.20 p.m. a Catalina flying-boat droned low overhead. An hour and a half later Clarke and his men landed at the base and flashed the news of the great success. Then they boarded planes for Britain—with information that was to save thousands of British and American lives.

## Eleven Against the Nazi A-Bomb

*By Frederic Sondern*

ONE MORNING in February 1944, the heavily laden railway ferry *Hydro* was plunging through the choppy waves of Lake Tunnsjö in Norway. Suddenly—the dull boom of an explosion below-decks. The ship lurched and shuddered to a stop. Five minutes later the *Hydro* had sunk, and with it Hitler's dream of possessing the first atom bomb. Behind that explosion lies the story of one of the war's most fantastic undercover operations.

As far back as April 1940, the international scientists' bush telegraph—notoriously indiscreet and uncontrollable—had indicated that the Kaiser Wilhelm Institut was conducting extensive experiments towards splitting the atom. Then, just as America's project was being set up in 1942, the Intelligence Section of the British Ministry of Economic Warfare came through with electrifying information: the Germans had ordered the Norwegian electro-chemical plant, Norsk Hydro, largest of its kind in the world, to increase its production of deuterium oxide (heavy water) from 3,000 to 10,000 pounds a year. That could mean only one appalling thing. Allied physicists had discovered that heavy water was an ideal moderator to use in the preparation of Uranium 235. Since the Allies did not possess sufficient heavy water, and since its refinement took a year and a half, graphite was finally and successfully used for the process. But the intelligence report confirmed that the Kaiser Wilhelm Institut was well along with its experiments.



The problem of paralysing Norsk Hydro and destroying its stocks of heavy water was given highest priority by Churchill's War Cabinet. The Air Staff reported that a bombing attack on this pinpoint objective, ringed by vicious mountains, was not practicable with the planes then available. It was a Commando job.

Some time earlier, a group of Norwegian resistance men had seized the coastal steamer *Galtesund* and sailed her through the mine and submarine perils of the North Sea into Aberdeen. One of them was a hydro-electrical specialist who had already organized a highly effective section of the Norwegian underground.

Einar (as he was known for security reasons) was immediately summoned to Special Forces headquarters in London. The intelligent, powerfully built engineer was a master on skis and an excellent shot—important qualifications for the job ahead. He had an unshakeable calm; there was a quality of determination in every gesture. Still better, he had lived within a few miles of the Norsk Hydro plant almost all his life and had a brother and friends in important positions there.

At Special Forces headquarters Einar met Dr. Leif Tronstad, who had been designing engineer of Norsk Hydro's heavy-water plant. It was Dr. Tronstad who had developed the large-scale production of deuterium oxide and, as a pre-war personal friend of a great number of German nuclear physicists, had more exact information about Germany's atomic bomb progress than any non-German alive. Late in 1941 Tronstad had been smuggled into Sweden by the Norwegian underground, and flown to London.

After a talk with Tronstad, Einar was asked, "Do you think that Norsk Hydro can be put out of commission by sabotage?" He explained the situation with Scandinavian deliberation. The plant was a seven-story, massively constructed, steel and concrete building. It and the equally solid hydro-electric power works near by were perched on the brink of a 1,000-foot gorge. All approaches, and the plant itself, were guarded by picked German troops. The mountains round it were almost impassable. It would

be a very difficult task indeed. "But," he added, "we would certainly like to have a go at it."

Einar was whisked off to the Special Forces training centre. Being an amateur wireless operator, he quickly learned to operate a powerful short-wave receiver-transmitter which fitted into a small suit-case. He was taught the necessary codes, made his parachute training jumps, and was given his final orders. He was to return to Norway immediately, gather every available scrap of information about Norsk Hydro, send it to London, and await the arrival of a reinforcing group.

On a moonlit night Einar plummeted out of an R.A.F. bomber into the mountains twenty miles from his home. He picked himself up—"with a queer feeling in the stomach," as he put it—and skied home. He had breakfast with his mother before daybreak. "I just told my family that I'd been away on a ski-ing trip. I had some nasty doubts for a few days; but evidently no one knew I had been in on the *Galtesund* affair."

Through his brother, Einar secured a job with Norsk Hydro on the construction of a new dam being built to increase the heavy-water output. With infinite care he organized his most trusted friends into a reliable service which brought him every item of news about the factory. This information was then quickly sent on to British central intelligence.

Production of deuterium oxide was increasing rapidly, Einar reported; stocks of it were being shipped monthly to Germany. The War Cabinet ordered Combined Operations to prepare a Commando assault on Norsk Hydro at once.

Combined Operations, with all their experience in suicidal exploits, faced one of their toughest jobs. Craggy mountains, over which violent air currents roar unpredictably, make Norway the worst country in Europe for parachute or glider attacks. But with the help of Dr. Tronstad, who directed the construction of exact models of the target and its inner works, and Einar's precise reports, Operation Swallow was finally organized.

Four picked Norwegians, all expert skiers and natives of the area, were to be dropped first to reinforce Einar and form a reception committee for a later Commando assault by British airborne troops. Twice a bomber took the Swallows over Norway, ready to jump, only to be forced back by impenetrable cloud. Finally, on an evening in October 1942, they were bundled into their plane at a few minutes notice and several hours later jumped into the night. Next morning, they found they were on a rugged mountainside more than 100 miles from their operation area. It took them two days to find their equipment in the scattered parachuted containers.

During the next fifteen days, the Swallows made one of the classic treks of the war. At 4,000 feet altitude, in constantly sub-zero weather, a sixty-pound pack was the maximum that one man could carry. That meant that each day each Swallow had to shuttle three times over the same route to move his 120-pound load. The daily ration of each man was a small slab of cheese, a handful of groats, a handful of flour and four biscuits.

At last, on 9th November, the anxious officers of Combined Operations heard the long-awaited Swallow code signal. They were in position near Norsk Hydro, had made contact with Einar and were ready to guide in the glider-borne sabotage party by radio and landing lights.

On 19th November two Halifax bombers, each towing a glider full of airborne troops, took off from Britain. A few hours later an agent in Norway radioed that bombers and tows had crashed and that all personnel had been killed or captured.

Worse news was to follow. A German military intelligence officer, searching the plane wreckage, had found a map with a red line drawn through Vemork, the town where the heavy-water plant was located. The German Reichskommissar for Norway, Josef Terboven, and Commanding General von Falkenhorst rushed to Vemork to inspect its defences. SS troops combed the neighbourhood and arrested everyone suspected of pro-British sentiments. But they did not find any of the Swallows.

In London, desperate Combined Operations started all over again. The idea of a glider attack was given up. Six Special Force Norwegians would be dropped by parachute. Dr. Tronstad went to work training them with maps and models. Time was growing short. The Swallows, with little food and the batteries of their radios running down, were hanging on under frightful conditions in their 4,000-foot mountain eyrie. They were living in a tiny snow-covered hut—"Everybody except myself," the Swallow leader reported, "sick of fever and pains in the stomach." They were forced to eat reindeer moss. Einar, a few miles away, was running a close race with the Gestapo; but every few days he would leave his tiny camouflaged hut in the snow, ski down at dusk and meet his trusted informants around Vemork.

Soon Einar radioed the almost unbelievable information that the Germans, for some reason, believed that the Commandos had not been after the Norsk Hydro plant itself, but the new dam being built near by. One hundred new guards had been put on the dam; only twelve were assigned to the factory.

By late December, Operation Gunnerside was ready to go. The six Norsemen dropped one evening on the snow-covered ice of Lake Skryken, thirty miles north of the Swallow hide-out. They had barely started their march when the most savage snowstorm for years obscured the countryside. For five desperate days the Norwegians froze and starved in an abandoned hunting lodge. At last the storm blew itself out, and the exhausted men pushed on. Approaching their rendezvous, they suddenly noticed two skiers in the distance. Nerve-racking minutes followed; any clash with a German patrol would be disastrous. One of the Gunnerside men put on a camouflage ski-smock over his uniform and a civilian ski-cap, and went to meet the strangers. If they were Germans he was to pretend to be a reindeer warden on his rounds. The rest got down in the snow, their hands on their guns. But then, above the noise of the wind, three wild yells of pleasure signalled the meeting of "Gunnerside" and "Swallow."

After that, events moved quickly. At the Swallows' hiding place, the Norwegians—there were now eleven of them—put their heads together. Einar supplied the latest details on the positions of the guards and the times of their changing, which gates were locked and how. The attackers would have to descend several snow-covered miles of steeply sloping forest, clamber down into a 1,000-foot gorge, cross a raging torrent, and scale another 1,000-foot, almost sheer wall of rock to reach a railway embankment which led to the factory. At the slightest alarm the whole area would be automatically floodlighted.

At eight o'clock on 27th February nine men started out. Loaded as they were with sensitive demolition charges, their floundering descent through the treacherous snow to the bottom of the gorge was a nightmare. A sudden thaw had filled the mountain stream with careering ice floes and charging water. After a feverish search, they finally found a small ice bridge, partly inundated but still passable. Then began the terrible climb up the rock face. Ronnie, the party's leader, kept looking at his wrist watch; the precise timetable allowed for little delay. Inching their way up 1,000 feet of almost perpendicular cliff, the Norwegians all knew that one slip would spell oblivion.

On top at last, after herculean effort, they crept forward, gasping, along the railway embankment to within 500 feet of the factory. They could hear the hum of its machinery. Ronnie, in a final whispered conference, made sure that everyone knew exactly what to do. "It's time," he said finally. One of the men, armed with powerful shears, went first—to the factory gate which had been chosen because it was secured with only a chain and padlock. Then came the sharp snap of cracking steel. The others froze in their tracks. But there were no sounds from within. Quickly, they filed through the open gate. A group of five, their tommy guns ready, quietly took position round the barracks in which the twelve German guards were quartered. If the alarm sounded, they were to shoot down the soldiers as they streamed out.

So well had Dr. Tronstad done his work that it took the demolition squad of four, led by Ronnie, only a few minutes to find the cable tunnel which led directly into a room adjoining the high concentration section. Two of Ronnie's men lost him in the darkness. But he and one other began to crawl through the maze of conduits.

The guard on duty in the all-important chamber suddenly looked up into the muzzles of two pistols and reached for the ceiling—silently. "He seemed frightened," the sober Norwegians' report recorded, "but otherwise was quiet and obedient." Quickly, Ronnie made the rounds of the tanks, pipes and machinery, and fastened his charges—as he had been taught to do on their replicas in Britain—where the explosive would do the most damage. Then—a clatter of glass. Someone had kicked in a basement window. Ronnie almost began shooting, but recognized in the nick of time that it was one of his strayed assistants clambering through the window. With shaking hands he finished his job.

Still the wail of the alarm siren, which he had been fearing from moment to moment, had not sounded. He checked the thirty-second fuses and lit them. He told the guard, a Norwegian, to run for it. Twenty yards outside the cellar door they heard the explosion, dull behind the massive concrete walls but shaking the ground under them.

By the time the siren began to shriek and the sleepy Germans, feverishly strapping on their cartridge belts, came pouring out, Ronnie and his men had vanished by the same perilous and—to the Germans—incredible route by which they had come. Meanwhile, 1,000 pounds of the priceless deuterium oxide had gushed from broken tanks on to the floor and into the factory's sewers.

Within a few hours General von Falkenhorst, the German commander, roared into Vemork. Surveying the damage he exclaimed, "This is the best damned *coup* I have ever seen." Then the General erupted orders. A whole division of the Wehrmacht, 12,000 strong, converged on the area. Ski patrols and slow-flying reconnaissance planes combed the mountains. All roads and trails were blocked,

while Gestapo and SS men made a house-to-house search. But of the raiders there was no trace.

Five of the six Gunnerside men had started immediately for the Swedish border on skis, and, after incredible hardships, made it safely and were flown back to Britain. The sixth, Bonzo, and the four Swallows stayed behind to take care of some other underground work, playing tag on skis with Falkenhorst's patrols. Einar retired to his cave-like lair, to report the sequel of the demolition and continue the watch on Norsk Hydro.

Late in 1943, Einar radioed that the damage had been repaired and the plant was resuming production. Almost immediately Allied bombers knocked out the factory's power station. Then the Germans decided to move all Norsk Hydro's heavy-water equipment and stocks to an underground site in the Reich. Einar requested permission to sink the ferryboat *Hydro*, which was to carry goods wagons with these remaining stocks across Lake Tunnsjö on a certain day. Permission came speedily, and Einar instructed Bonzo, who was working with a Norwegian underground detachment some fifty miles away, to join him. With forged papers Bonzo, masquerading as a Norsk Hydro employee, made an exploratory crossing on the *Hydro* to decide how she should be sunk so as to make salvage impossible. Just before she sailed, time charges were placed in her forepeak bilges.

A few days later, the last of Germany's deuterium oxide was under the waters of Lake Tunnsjö. In desperate need of something that could be developed and used against the Allies quickly, Hitler and Goering turned to other weapons, and German experiments in atomic energy were slowed to a standstill. To eleven gallant Norwegians the Allies owed a very real debt of gratitude.

*Condensed from The Minneapolis Tribune*

## A Day of Sweeping Mines off Dover

*By William L. White*

"A FINE doggie!" says the captain, taking the dachshund into his arms. "Her name is Bombproof Bella. She's made every trip since I was given command of the *Stella Orion*. Been dived-bombed, machine-gunned, blown about by mines. Just loves 'em. Gives tongue like a foxhound when we explode one."

We are standing on the bridge of a fishing boat, now a mine-sweeping trawler in the Royal Navy. The bridge is really the roof of the wheelhouse, enclosed by an armoured steel railing. On the port and starboard sides are anti-aircraft machine-guns. At bow and stern are platforms mounting four-inch guns.

Turning to the captain, I said: "I suppose you duck behind the railing when you're dive-bombed."

"Complete waste of time. You never know where a bomb is going to strike a ship and wouldn't know where to crouch. Might as well stand up and watch the fun."

The trawler is under way now, leading three other trawlers. Above the Channel the air is any man's sky, for the blue is combed into great swirls of white by constant air battles. Up there we see the misty spoor of a squadron of Messerschmitts.

We also see the exact point where a few minutes ago half a dozen Hurricanes dived into the squadron, breaking the even parallel line-up into a dozen wavering spirals. The battle is still going on. At that great height it all seems infinitely slow—very hard to realize that



the microscopic planes are doing more than 300 miles an hour.

The waters beneath this battleground are equally any man's ocean. The British control the surface by day. But at night the German minelayers sow death in the shipping lanes.

The first officer points to the French coast. "Might let us know if you notice any flashes coming from over there. A German battery fired more than 100 shells at us last Wednesday. Probably mistook us for a convoy, because they seldom bother with trawlers."

"How many ships did they hit?"

"They've never hit a ship yet although one shell landed in our wake, not twenty yards astern."

"What do you do when you see a flash?"

"Glance at your watch so you'll know when it's time to duck behind the railing. You see, the battery is twenty miles away. To get a shell that distance takes one minute and twenty seconds after you see the flash—time to light a cigarette before taking shelter."

OUR TRAWLING tackle is about 200 yards of steel cable unreel-  
ed over one side of the boat. At its end is a hollow floating tin fish slightly longer than a man. Suspended vertically under this is a thin steel plate, called a door because it is shaped like one.

This door is an underwater kite, also attached to the cable, kept about twelve feet below the surface by the floating tin fish. As we steam ahead this apparatus moves out from the side of the ship until the cable is stretched tautly at a 45° angle with the ship's wake.

The cable, woven of special steel, acts as an underwater saw—a cutting blade 200 yards long. It moves under the mines, cutting quickly through their anchor cables. The mines then bob to the surface where they can be destroyed.

We are the leading ship in our flotilla. Behind our float comes the second ship—its course is just inside the wake of our tin fish, so the ship itself is travelling in water which we have just swept; the trawl from this second ship extends another 200 yards into dangerous water; the third and fourth ships are in similar positions.

Suddenly the bridge shivers. Bombproof Bella opens her long brown muzzle to scream with joy. Half-way between us and our bobbing tin fish, a short, thin column of water rises into the air.

"Damn!" says the first officer. "Stop engines!"

Our tin fish is dropping rapidly astern, its cable broken.

"That was an explosive cutter," says the first officer. "A filthy little tiny mine moored to touch our cutting cable when we are trawling for big ones. Now we have to stop and sling out a new gear.

"One of us will probably strike a huge mine soon. When the Germans lay a big one, they usually protect it with explosive cutters."

I marvel at the accuracy with which these men can sweep a given area of trackless sea. First they divide the Channel into tracts on a chart. Then each mine-sweeper locates the boundaries of his tract by constantly taking careful bearings. An error might leave unswept a minefield which would destroy a precious cargo ship.

These men insist that their job is not very dangerous because if properly handled a mine-sweeper need almost never go into unswept water. It sails over water swept the previous day. The cable and float project out into the danger area. But any mistake in navigation or failure to allow for drift of wind and tide brings great danger.

"AIRCRAFT off the starboard bow, sir!" calls the look-out. We rake the sky with our glasses and spot a black dot, high up.

"It's the German spotter plane," the first officer says. "Comes out every afternoon. If there's a convoy moving through, it sends the position by wireless to the long-range batteries around Calais. Now and then it dives down to machine-gun us just for pure devilry."

The plane starts a big circle round us. "We had better look sharp—she may go into a dive," says the captain. The plane completes a second circle, straightens out and flies towards the English coast.

Just then the ship quivers like a plucked fiddle string, whereupon Bombproof Bella gives tongue in hysterical delight. About 100 yards out from the side of the second trawler is another slim ghostly column of water—higher than the trawler's masts.

"Jolly close!" says the first officer excitedly. "Twenty yards nearer and it might have stove her in and tossed the chaps on the bridge into the water. She must have had her cutting cable too near the surface so that it tangled in the mine's prongs."

"How many types of mine are there?" I ask.

"Can't tell you. The Germans would like to know which we can render harmless so they can abandon them for new models."

"Are the Germans so ingenious?"

"Occasionally. More often Jerry is a creature of habit. Perhaps you've heard of Monday, Wednesday and Friday? It's a classic in all trawlers. Supposed to have happened on the Thames estuary. It seems this Jerry mine-layer came out regularly every Monday, Wednesday and Friday night to lay exactly the same number of mines in exactly the same places. So regularly every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday our chaps would sweep them up. Went on for weeks, until finally our chaps decided to skip a day to see what would happen. Just as they thought, the mine-layer came out on Wednesday night and blew himself to bits on one of the mines he had laid on Monday. Our chaps went out and pulled in a dozen Germans including the captain. He was furious. Very bitter at us for neglecting our duty and not sweeping up the field. Said such sloppiness would never be tolerated in the German Navy."

"HOSTILE AIRCRAFT off the port beam!" calls the look-out.

"It's the German spotter coming back," says the first officer. "Seems to be heading for us."

The gun crews are standing round their guns, looking up. I find I am unconsciously measuring my distance from the steel railing.

"She's starting to dive, sir," shouts the first officer. Pivoting on one wing, she comes straight down at us—the sun glinting on her black cowling like an angry eye. I move towards the steel railing.

The captain says, "Better give her the first round now."

The shouted command rings out, the ship shakes with the report, and a round black cloud appears midway between us and the plane.

As suddenly as it dived, the plane veers off. It swerves, twists into a climb and circles out of range.

A sailor climbs to the bridge with a folded paper. "Signal from Number Three ship," the captain reads. "They've surfaced a mine. We're at the end of our run so you can watch them sink it."

Suddenly I see about a mile ahead what apparently is a waterspout, 100 feet tall, shaped like a snow-covered spruce.

"By Jove," says the first officer, "they're shelling us! That spotting plane has sent our position to the long-range batteries."

We watch two more huge waterspouts rise, slowly fade into mist and silently dissolve, as we complete the big turn which points us back towards Dover. But Number Three ship stays motionless until the *Stella Orion* comes alongside, when we can hear the zip of rifle bullets fired by an officer from her bridge—each one flicking a feather of spray from a wave. Among these bobs the shiny black round mine. The range seems quite long to me.

The first officer explains: "You see, now and then the bullet, instead of puncturing and sinking the mine, explodes it. I've seen a big mine open the seams of a trawler at 100 yards. At fifty it might chuck the chaps off into the water."

When the mine is sunk our flotilla reel in their tackle, and follow the white cliffs back towards Dover. The misty trails of an air battle going on above us thicken into huge ropes of fleece, the snarls fused into a cloud bank blood-red in the setting sun.

"You know, I'd like to come out again," I say.

"Afraid you'll find it the same old grind," says the captain. "Mine-sweeping is only exciting in the newspapers."

PERHAPS. Only three days later I see in an evening paper an item which chronicles the sinking in action of HMS trawler *Stella Orion*, and the rescue of all her crew. And I am sure that as her big blue-eyed captain was pulled grunting into the lifeboat, the reproachfully forgiving black eyes of unsinkable little Bombproof Bella were peeping out of his life jacket, just under his chin.

## The Hunt for a Spy

*By Carl Wall*

THIS is a spy story minus false whiskers, cloak and dagger. There is no beautiful Mata Hari. No desperate cliff-edge struggle. Not a shot is fired. And yet this case is one of the most intriguing in the annals of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation. It is the hunt for an unknown man lost in the swirling tides of New York City's millions of inhabitants.

On the night of 20th February 1942, an alert postal censor, scanning mail destined for Portugal, plucked a typewritten sheet from an airmail envelope. It was apparently harmless—the sort of letter one old friend writes another. But the address was one of those listed by counter-espionage agents abroad as an accommodation address for German agents.

Hours later, in the Washington laboratories of the FBI, a chemist stroked the blank side of the paper with a chemically saturated sponge. From the empty whiteness, the secret writing slowly appeared, twisting in the curious hieroglyphics of German hand-printing. The message conveyed information on troop ships and freighters making up for convoy in the Port of New York. In enemy hands it would threaten the lives of soldiers and seamen and tons of valuable shipping.

The spy must be captured. But the laboratory yielded only one thin clue. The letter had been typed on an Underwood three-bank portable machine. Special agents began an almost hopeless

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check on all typewriter sales and rentals in the New York area.

Soon there were two more letters, both mailed from New York post offices. Did this mean that the spy lived in New York? And what did he look like? Usually when police are hunting a criminal they have some description to go by. Here the FBI had nothing.

One night a special agent, mulling over photostatic copies of the original letters, was struck by the fact that certain passages of the typed section had a curious aura of truth. Most of it, he knew, was sheer invention; but about the inconsequential trivia of everyday life the spy might well be truthful. With surging excitement, the special agent jotted down these things which seemed to be true:

X is married. He owns his home. He has a dog which has been ill with distemper. He has a regular job. He leaves his home between seven and eight o'clock every weekday morning. He recently had his glasses changed. He is an air raid warden.

There were 98,338 air raid wardens in Greater New York.

"That's a heck of a lot of air raid wardens," grinned the agent-in-charge when he heard about the idea. "But it's better than eight million. We've at least got a toenail hold."

With grim tenacity the FBI began the heroic task of checking every one of those wardens. How many are married? How many own homes? How many own dogs? Which wear spectacles?

As more letters were intercepted, the image of X took shape. These items went on to the list: He has a garden. His home is threatened by mortgage foreclosure. He wants to own a chicken farm.

The shadow of the invisible spy was still indefinite but it could no longer be cast by millions. Hard-working FBI agents, day by day, night by night, cut the figure: 98,000 . . . 88,000 . . . 81,000. But even 81,000 is a lot of people.

On the night of 14th April, the twelfth letter was intercepted. From it the investigators plucked this apparently innocent, nostalgic passage: "It is very warm here and the trees are beginning to bud. The spring always reminds me of that wonderful week we spent on the beach at Estoril. . . ."

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ESTORIL! The FBI knew Estoril. A resort a few miles outside Lisbon, it was a clearing-house for German espionage agents.

There was a hurried conference. What was the best way to check everyone entering the United States from Lisbon since the spring of 1941? There was no photograph to compare with passport photographs. No fingerprints. No name. Then one of the agents clicked:

"We have a fairly good specimen of X's handwriting—the signature on the letters—Fred Lewis. The name is phoney but the handwriting isn't, because it's almost as hard to disguise your handwriting as it is to change your fingerprints."

"Every person entering the United States," he went on, "must fill in a baggage declaration for customs. Why couldn't our boys go through the file at the US Customs Office in New York and compare the handwriting on the declarations with this signature."

Next morning, FBI handwriting experts, armed with photographic copies of the hunted spy's handwriting, began working their way through thousands upon thousands of customs declarations. The spring of 1941 had been the high tide of the refugee flood from Lisbon. The handwriting on baggage declarations was a weird assortment: Polish, German, French, Dutch, Russian.

The work of the handwriting expert is an exact science. Clues hang on the slightest twist of an E or the looping of an L. Each of the forms had to be examined with meticulous care. For days the experts burrowed their way through the mountainous stacks.

And this was only one phase of the great manhunt, now in full swing. Every scrap of information that had been sweated from those twelve letters was being checked and double-checked. Of the 98,000 air raid wardens, nearly 60,000 had been eliminated. FBI agents get their answers by asking questions, waiting, humouring silent ones and enduring talkative ear benders. Every phase of the investigation consumed precious time.

At nine o'clock on the night of 9th June 1943, a special agent picked one more form from the stacks in the New York Customs Office, the 4,881st that had been examined. Suddenly, as his eyes

focused on the signature at the bottom of the sheet, his weariness vanished. He reached for his magnifying-glass. Yes. He was sure of it. There was the same looping E. The same slanting F. The identical sloping S. The expert startled his colleagues with a bellow.

That night in the Washington laboratory, the signature was photographed, the prints enlarged and compared with the spy letters. The experts were sure now. At 1.45 a.m. the telephone rang in the FBI's office: "Check the name Ernest F. Lehmitz."

The list of air-raid wardens was consulted. On it was the name Lehmitz—123 Oxford Place, Tompkinsville, Staten Island, N.Y.

Less than an hour later special agents strode down the gangplank of the ferry from Manhattan to Staten Island. A blustering show of guns? A duel in the dawn? Nothing quite so simple. There were other questions to be answered. Are there accomplices? Where and how is the spy getting his information? Spies seldom talk after they are arrested. And another factor: spies get a trial in America, and evidence must be accumulated to convince the jury.

Throughout the night, FBI agents watched the house in Oxford Place. At 7.15, a tall, spare man wearing *spectacles* walked out and hurried along the street. One of the FBI men followed him. Not far from the house, the suspect turned into a restaurant.

Despite the early morning hour, the restaurant was filled with dock workers, soldiers and sailors. The agent went inside. Over his coffee cup, he watched. His man had donned a soiled apron and was mopping the floor. He seemed to be about fifty-five, with mild blue eyes and wispy brown hair. You wouldn't look at him twice—he was just a sparrow among thousands of sparrows.

In the restaurant men were talking: cargoes, ship movements, sailing dates. The agent drained his coffee cup and went out.

For the next sixteen days and nights the spy was shadowed. Special agents, posing as salesmen and talkative bar-flies, unearthed one damning fact after another—damning because they matched so perfectly the chit-chat of the spy letters. Neighbours like to talk:

"Ernie? Yes, I know Ernie. He's *air raid warden* for the block



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and you should have heard how he bawled people out for not dimming lights. Ernie takes the war seriously."

"Ernie? A kindhearted guy. *He had a dog that died of distemper* last summer and you'd have thought he'd lost his best friend."

"Ernie Lehmitz? Got one of the best *gardens* on the Island."

"Too bad the bank foreclosed on that *mortgage*."

"Sure I know him. He usually stops in here for a glass of beer. All he talks about is the *chicken farm* he plans to buy."

Slowly, the noose tightened. At eight o'clock on the morning of 27th June 1943, one year, four months and seven days after the first letter had been intercepted, Lehmitz was brought into the FBI offices. He was shown the letters, the great mass of evidence so painfully accumulated. The avalanche of facts was too much. He signed a complete confession.

He had first arrived in the United States in 1908 as clerk in the German Consulate in New York. There were several trips to Germany. During the last, in 1938, he was recruited by the German espionage system, trained in the use of secret inks and the labyrinthine ways of the spy. He was ordered to return to the United States in the spring of 1941, find steady employment, pose as a good citizen, lose himself among millions.

In his confession, Lehmitz implicated another spy, Erwin Harry DeSpretter. Both were sentenced to thirty years imprisonment.

How well Lehmitz had played his role was indicated a few weeks after his arrest when many of his Staten Island neighbours dropped in to offer Mrs. Lehmitz their sympathy. One of the women, who had a son in the service, said: "It can't be anything very bad. Why, that Ernie Lehmitz wouldn't hurt a flea."

But to the FBI, the trapping of this stoop-shouldered, mild-mannered spy had been one of the most tedious jobs of the war. A spy who scrubs floors and grows vegetables may not be glamorous—but he's pretty hard to catch.

*Condensed from The American Legion Magazine*

## Death in the Lifeboat

*By Walter Gibson*

TEN MINUTES before midnight on Sunday, 9th March 1942, the torpedo struck the *Rooseboom*.

We had set off, three days before, from Padang, Sumatra—500 of us, military personnel who had been defending Singapore, Civil Service officials with their families, a smattering of other refugees. I had been asleep on deck and woke to find myself sprawling in the scuppers. The deck was already sloping so steeply that the rail was almost awash. As I threw myself into the water I heard choking cries for help: other voices were shouting, "Where are you, Mac?" "Is that you, Jock?"

Near me a naked man clung to a piece of debris. I shouted, "Do you mind if I share your piece of wood?"

"By all means, old man," he replied.

We must have clung there for more than an hour before we saw near us the blurred figures of people standing up in a lifeboat. The scene was one of pandemonium, with men scrambling desperately to get into the lurching boat. Then, one by one, we were pulled unceremoniously aboard the floating hell that was to be my abode for twenty-six endless days.

Our lifeboat was twenty-eight feet long and only eight feet at its widest. The gunwales were just a few inches above water. When dawn came a count revealed eighty of us in the boat, which had been built to hold twenty-eight. Most of us were standing—face to face

or back to back. It was impossible to change position. In the water, clinging to the boat, were fifty-five more survivors.

I was in the stern. Close by, his hand on the tiller, was the stout, red-faced Dutch captain of the *Rooseboom*. Near us, clad only in a shirt, was Brigadier "Archie" Paris, who had commanded the 11th Indian Division.

There were three women. One, pleasant-faced and motherly-looking, I recognized as Mrs. Nunn, wife of the Director of Works at Singapore. There was a woman of thirty or so, the wife of the Dutch chief-officer. The third was a slim Chinese, Doris Lim, who had been working for British Intelligence.

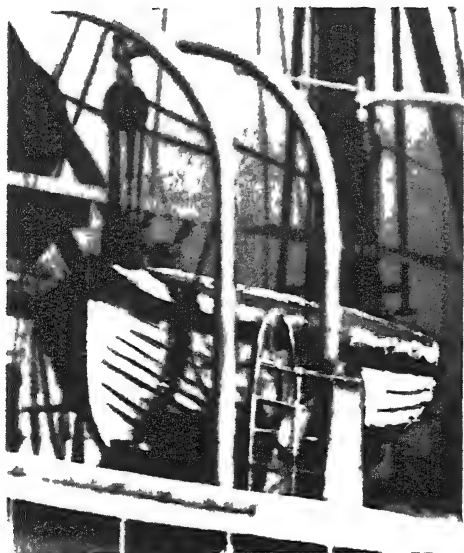
Perched in the bow were a dozen Javanese seamen.

The brigadier stood up in the stern and called for attention. We of the Indian Service knew him as a man with a brave record in two wars. Although almost dazed with exhaustion, he stood very erect, legs bare beneath the shirt tail, addressing his troops as if on a parade ground. "The captain," he said, "will be in command of the boat. I shall be responsible for discipline. I look to you all, as British soldiers, to retain your soldierly qualities until help arrives."

He gave us the meagre tally of our rations. With sinking hearts we learned that each would receive a tablespoonful of water every sun-up and a spoonful of tinned milk and water at night. A twelve-ounce tin of bully-beef would be shared among twelve people each day. From her handbag the Dutch mate's wife produced, of all surprising objects, a tablespoon which, while our water lasted, was to be our measure.

To lessen the unbearable overcrowding, every man who was not injured was to take a compulsory spell of four hours each day clinging to the life lines in the water.

Towards evening there was a dramatic arrival—Lieutenant-Colonel Douglas of the Indian Army Ordnance Corps, who had swum from a raft which had drifted towards us. His nerves were at breaking point. He told us that with him on the raft had been a dying white woman, one of her legs blown off by the explosion, and Major



A lifeboat aboard the Roosevelt  
—before disaster struck



The author—one of the five survivors



Brigadier Paris—he issued the rations



Mrs. Nunn—she led the prayers

Angus MacDonald of the Argylls. MacDonald had had with him a flask of brandy and had spent the day drinking it in an attempt to assuage his thirst. The effects in the heat were disastrous.

"Angus MacDonald is raving mad," said Douglas. "I had to leave him. He was trying to push me off the raft."

His voice rose excitedly as he continued his tale, which finally became a crazy, high-pitched babble. He would speak one sentence in English, the next in Urdu. Suddenly he struck out at everybody round him. I heard someone say: "Put him over before he tips the boat up." There was a splash.

The next morning Major Noel Corrie of the Engineers announced that, to ease the overcrowding, he and some volunteers would construct from floating debris a raft to be towed behind the boat. It was a shaky structure, tied together with strips of cloth and sisal fibre salvaged from the sea. When twenty men climbed aboard, it sank until they were standing waist-deep in the water.

Through the three days that followed, man after man slipped off the raft. At last there was only Corrie, more dead than alive, his upper body blackened by the sun, his legs bleached by the water. Paris ordered Corrie pulled aboard. That night he died.

Hunger's gnawing pain seemed to reach a climax fairly soon and then we forgot about it. But thirst! One always seemed to be trying to swallow, always licking one's lips—and with each day this effort became more painful. We were ordered not to drink sea water, but during the night there was much surreptitious drinking, and gradually people ceased to care. Those who drank large quantities went into a coma from which they never emerged, except crazed.

As we began to blister from the sun, people tore off what few clothes they had to dip them in the sea and put them over their heads. But the salt water would make the pain worse than before.

All of us became prey to hallucinations. The first victim was a colour sergeant of the Gordon Highlanders. One morning he said, "It won't be long now till the flying boat gets back."

"What flying boat?" I asked.

"The one that came last night," he said, "the one that took the women and wounded off."

A soldier leaned over the side and drank from the sea. "It's fresh!" he cried. "The water's fresh!"

I began to dream—fierce, vivid dreams of food and drink and friendly gatherings. Then I would wake to the creak-creak as the boat swayed in the current.

Slowly the spirit of comradeship with which we had set off vanished. We found ourselves constantly watching our fellows—covertly, suspiciously. From the beginning there had been a careful watch on the rations. "But who," we began to think, "is watching the watchers?" Each day's share-out became like the feeding of a band of ravenous animals.

We saw another indication of how things were going when a sergeant-major, who had been given a lifebelt for his spell in the water because he could not swim, refused to hand it over to another non-swimmer. He clung to the life-belt as if it were his last link with his world. In the end it was forcibly taken off him. That night we could hear him proclaiming his grievance. Then we heard someone strike him. Next morning he was gone.

Other people began disappearing during the night. No one asked any questions. At the back of our minds was the feeling that every man less meant more room in the boat.

About that time we became aware of a group of five men who sat huddled together up near the bow, talking in undertones and looking about them furtively. We could sense that they were up to no good.

One night a storm blew up and we shipped gallons of water. As some of us bailed frantically we heard screams and shouts, and in the morning twenty people were missing. It was then I became convinced that the men who had muttered in the bow had formed a murder gang, determined that, if everybody else had to go, they would survive.

As the days wore on, things became worse. For two days the

first officer lay in a coma, his face blistered, his head in his wife's lap while she crooned Dutch words of comfort to him. One night we heard her cry "*Nae, nae*" as though to dissuade him from something. Suddenly he broke away from her, shouted in English: "Going . . . going to swim . . . find help." Then he sprang over the side and swam away. His wife sat for nearly a day, moaning softly. Then, at sunset, there was a sudden movement in the boat, and she plunged overboard.

Brigadier Paris sank into a torpor. But he had a self-appointed guardian, young Captain Mike Blackwood, who performed little duties for the rapidly weakening Paris—even to the extent of saving part of his own tiny water ration for him.

One day the brigadier suddenly raised his head and said to Blackwood—quite quietly, very pleasantly: "I say, let's go along to the club for a drink."

Blackwood answered, as conversationally as if they had been strolling down St. James's: "Let's make it later, sir."

Blackwood announced the brigadier's death to the troops. As we slipped him over the side Blackwood repeated such passages from the burial service as he could remember. The brigadier was the only one for whom we could summon up enough strength to have such a service.

Poor Blackwood survived his friend by only a day. He slipped unconscious to the bottom of the boat and in the night was drowned in the lapping bilge water.

Within two hours of the brigadier's funeral, the Dutch captain was stabbed by his engineer. We heard a shout, a sudden splutter of Dutch invective, and before anyone could get to him, the engineer had buried a knife in the old man's ribs.

"Grab him!" someone shouted, and flung himself on the engineer as he tried to snatch the few remaining rations. The engineer broke away and jumped overboard.

That was the strange feature of every suicide. As people decided to jump overboard they seemed to resent the fact that others were

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being left behind with a chance of safety. They would try to seize the rations and fling them overboard or try to make their last action the pulling of the bung which would let in the sea.

It was on the seventh evening, a Sunday, that we finished the last bottle of water.

Lieutenant-Colonel G. A. Palmer roused himself to speak to the boat's company. "I don't think there is much hope for us," he said. "Mrs. Nunn has suggested that we commit ourselves to God. She would like to conduct a service."

Somehow, heaven knows how, we had a Bible, waterlogged and tattered. Mrs. Nunn stood up, her face blackened by the sun, her voice cracked and whispering from thirst and weakness. She opened the Bible and read aloud. Then, with her, this strange mixed bag of tortured, desperate human beings quaveringly sang, "Abide with Me" and said the Lord's Prayer.

There were perhaps fifty of us left when that service was held. Thereafter men went quickly.

Then one morning Palmer was no longer there. Mrs. Nunn, hardly able to move her lips, managed to whisper to me, "Palmer was murdered. I saw them." Up in the bow, malignant and threatening, sat the five deserters. That day Mrs. Nunn slipped into unconsciousness and died.

Now the murder gang came out into the open. Suddenly they jumped from behind on a young soldier and drew a jagged bully-beef tin across his throat. Warrant-Officer MacKenzie said to me: "Don't you realize that we are all going to be killed? Those men intend to commandeer the boat."

I thought to myself, "Well, here's the showdown." I asked him, "How many men do you think we can rely on if we try to put them overboard?"

When darkness came MacKenzie moved about the among the others, then told me that he had fourteen men ready to deal with the murder gang. We moved down the boat, converging on the five men. One tough shouted, "Here they come!" and pulled out a bottle.



Drummer Hardy of the Argylls sprang forward. The bottle crashed down on his head. Two of the murder gang grabbed him and pushed him overboard. Then we were at their throats. We struggled and rolled in the bottom of the boat.

We did not seem to put them overboard one by one as much as to rush them over in a body. Three got their hands to the gunwale and tried to drag themselves back. Relentlessly we battered at their fingers with the rowlocks.

Perhaps by this stage there were a score of us left. I cannot really remember. Sun and salt water had rotted our remaining rags and so we were all naked. Great sores, where the flesh seemed to melt away, formed on our sun-blackened skin.

The order in which incidents happened after that is hazy to me, but I remember the day rain came, and the day we caught the gulls. Many a time we had seen the rain afar off. Tense and excited, we would wait with our mouths open. And then we would see it move right away from us. But our rain was a cloudburst of huge, cold, battering drops. I asked every man not to drink until, scooping with our hands, we had filled our four empty bottles. The rain which collected in the bottom of the boat was mixed with the bilge, but, the bottles filled, we lapped our fill.

The gulls, about twelve of them, arrived out of the blue, flew round us and then settled tamely on the boat and on our heads and shoulders. No one dared make the slightest move. Then, with one accord, we pounced. We caught seven, tore them apart and gulped the raw flesh like wolves.

Then—on and on, hour after hour, day after day. Drifting in a silence broken only by the creak of the boat and the wash of the water. No one speaking, rarely moving. At last there were only seven of us left alive: Doris Lim, a soldier, four Javanese seamen and I.

Suddenly I was roused from my stupor by the soldier's voice: "Jock! Jock! Help me, Jock!"

Two of the Javanese were pounding his head with rowlocks. A

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third Javanese, with a tin pressed to form a blade, tore at his body. They were unquestionably mad.

One of the Javanese died that night. In the dark I crawled along the bottom of the boat and one by one found the rowlocks and threw them overboard. If the girl and I were to be the next to go, they must find some other weapon.

We dared not take our eyes off the three in the bow. But at night we could not keep our eyes open. Then one night I woke with a jerk as I felt a movement near my elbow. It was one of the Javanese. He grinned wolfishly as he repeated a word over and over again. It was Javanese for "land." Looking over the side I saw a shadow darker than the darkness.

We clung, all five of us, to the edge of the boat, afraid to let ourselves believe that this was really land and not an hallucination. Then came the unmistakable roar of surf.

We had been in the lifeboat for twenty-six days and drifted over 1,000 miles. The island on which we landed was Sipora, about sixty miles west of Sumatra. We stayed in a Malay village there for six weeks, until the Japanese arrived and carted us off to prison camp.

But one memory stands out above all others—the day the Malays brought me a mirror. Gazing back at me was a wild, black, high-cheekboned face like that of an Indian fakir, the hair and beard long and matted. It was perched on a body without flesh, the skin stretched black and burnt over the ribs. It was like looking at some charred piece, a twisted frame salvaged from a fire.

But as I laid down the mirror Doris Lim and I looked at each other, and suddenly, for the first time since the torpedo struck, a smile crossed her face. We were alive.

*Condensed from the Sunday Express*

## Joey's Quiet War

*By Thomas Johnson*

ACROSS the battlefields north of Manila trudged a little Filipino woman bearing a knapsack on her bent shoulders. Several of the Japanese soldiers started to question her. Some of them, seeing her bloated, scarred brown face, understood and shrank back. To others she bared her chest and showed her sores. When she uttered the one word "leprosy," no sentry persisted, none examined the knapsack, none found out that—taped on her back—she carried a map of the Japanese defences north of Manila.

The map accurately indicated minefields which the advancing US troops desperately needed to know about. Sick and suffering, Joey Guerrero got the map through and thereby saved hundreds of American lives. It was but one of her great contributions to an Allied victory in the Philippines.

As a little girl, Josefina had wanted to become a nun, but she contracted tuberculosis and the sisters said she was not strong enough for their life. On her parents' death a grandmother took her to a coconut plantation which she managed and brought her back to health.

Then Joey went to live with an uncle in Manila. There a young doctor, Renato Maria Guerrero, fell in love with the lively girl who had, to quote Joey herself, a "snub-nosed, funny little mug with unruly features." They were married. The future shone bright. But in the winter of 1941, when her daughter, Cynthia, was two years old, Joey began to lose strength and appetite. Swellings

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appeared. Her anxious husband called in a specialist. As gently as he could, he told her the truth. "It is in an early stage," he said. "You are only twenty-three, and there are promising treatments. But children are susceptible, so you must leave your child." For hours, she sat in the doctor's office praying for the surpassing self-control she would need for so many years. She went home. The child was playing in the nursery. It was like dying, but Joey dared not even risk kissing Cynthia good-bye when she sent her to her grandmother.

Husband and wife then began to plan their fight against the disease and against ostracism. It had not been long since lepers had to ring a bell as they walked along the streets of Manila. Specialists told them that leprosy was now recognized as only feebly contagious among adults and that Joey was no menace to others. But she did need good medical care and rest.

There was to be neither. Three weeks later came Pearl Harbour. Soon Japanese soldiers swaggered in Manila's streets. One day five of them stopped Joey and four other young Filipinos and made clear their intent. Joey, five feet and seven stone of outraged womanhood, whacked the largest soldier with her umbrella until he and his companions made off. That night one of the other women telephoned Joey. "Come to our house," she said, and hung up.

Her friend's husband awaited Joey. "A woman of your spirit should join the guerrillas," he said. "You're the kind for our secret service." He told her the Filipino underground was sending information about the Japanese to General MacArthur in Australia to help plan the islands' liberation. Would she join them? "I can't do big things," said Joey, "but every little helps. OK!"

Joey was given a trial assignment: "As you live opposite a Japanese barracks, for the next twenty-four hours count how many soldiers and vehicles go in and out, when, and in what direction."

Behind drawn blinds, Joey noted everything that passed, and the time. She not only counted a truck-load of Japanese soldiers, but observed that they looked dirty, as if coming from active service. She took a full notebook to the address given her. There she signed

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an oath of secrecy and loyalty. She had enlisted for what she calls "my quiet war." It was to last for three nerve-racking years.

Joey was given the job of watching the waterfront. There her keen eyes spotted hidden Japanese anti-aircraft guns. She made a sketch and concealed it in a hollowed-out fruit in a basket she carried. A Japanese soldier stopped her, pawed the fruit, greedily chose a large one, and walked on. Luckily she had put the sketch in a small fruit. After that she made only mental notes and did her drawing when she got home.

Joey was among the group of girls permitted to bring food to the starving Filipino and American prisoners. She radiated courage and faith to hollow-eyed troops, some of whom gave her information they had gleaned from talkative Japanese guards. Once a suspicious guard threatened her with a bayonet, finally gestured her on, giving her braided black hair a parting tug. Her hair ribbon concealed a prisoner's report, but it was tied too tightly to come off.

By September 1944 the approaching Americans were bombing Manila, smashing gun emplacements Joey had mapped for them. The Kempei Tai, the Japanese counter-intelligence police, had stool pigeons everywhere and many guerrillas were being caught and tortured or shot. Underground operations were now directed by the Allied Intelligence Bureau. After another cryptic telephone call, Joey met Manuel Colayco, formerly a professor at Santo Tomás University, now a captain in the Intelligence. Would Joey join the AIB? It might mean her life, but——

"What can I do?" she asked.

He told her to meet a truck at a rendezvous in the outskirts of the city. She wore wooden shoes in the hollow soles of which she had hidden thin packets of tissue paper containing guerrilla information about Japanese preparations to defend Manila. The truck took her fifty miles by rough back roads to Nagcarlán mountain. There a guide led her up a narrow path. A large boulder barred the route, and a voice from nowhere challenged them. Joey gave the password. A light flashed in her eyes from a tree above and then winked out.

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The guide turned the boulder as if it were on a hinge. They found themselves in a clearing where perhaps a hundred Filipino guerrillas were living in nipa-palm barracks. Joey watched them set up a wireless apparatus and send off her message.

She became "just a little errand boy." By various routes to the guerrilla hide-out she brought reports, maps and photographs. And it was at the camp that she heard the glorious news radioed through: "The Americans are landing on Luzon!"

The guerrillas made handbills on a smuggled mimeograph machine—LIBERATION IS NEAR!—and added a ringing appeal for help. Joey took the bills to Manila. In the blackout she and other volunteers slipped them under doors or into the hands of passers-by.

Next she was told to spot Japanese ammunition dumps. One night she heard a signal at her door. She admitted a man in Japanese uniform who handed her what seemed to be a bag of vegetables. "Here's something for Dr. Guerrero," he whispered quickly, and then slipped from the house. Her husband, who was also in the underground, took the bag of "vegetables," but said nothing. Many nights thereafter were thunderous with exploding ammunition dumps. In the daytime Joey checked to see which dumps needed more "vegetable treatment."

But soon Colayco sent word that she was needed as a messenger again, so Joey returned to Nagcarlán. She hoped the mountain air would renew her ebbing strength. With the scarcity of food and medicine, she was increasingly feverish and exhausted. She suffered excruciating headaches, her feet were swelling and more sores appeared on her body. Surely, she prayed, God and the returning Americans would bring help.

Early in 1945, when the Americans were approaching Manila, Colayco summoned her for the most dangerous mission of all. The guerrillas had sent the American Army a map of the Japanese defences which showed a wide section free of mines. The Americans planned to attack there, but now the Japanese had mined the area heavily. The guerrillas needed someone to take a corrected map to

## JOEY'S QUIET WAR

37th Division Headquarters at Calumpit, forty miles north of Manila. There was fighting all the way. The Japanese guarded every road and footpath, searched all passers-by. Vehicles could not get through. A woman on foot might, if she was small, shabby and courageous. "Just tell me where to go," Joey said quietly.

At first she walked under cover of night, but loss of sleep weakened her still more, and the headaches grew worse. She determined to try it by daylight. The first day a Japanese officer halted her, approached as if to search her. The map taped between her shoulder blades seemed to burn. As the officer came close, he peered at her face and saw that it was bloated and spotted with red. He stared at her in fear and then quickly waved her on. Joey suddenly realized that she had a terrible passport that would get her through.

After two days and nights on the road she reached American headquarters and delivered the map. Weak from sickness and reaction, she could not eat the pancakes and coffee which the Americans offered her, even though she had not tasted them for years.

Her road back took her through heavy fighting. Once, seeking shelter from shell bursts and snipers' bullets, she hid behind an American tank, which exploded and nearly killed her. When she reached Manila, she learned that Manuel Colayco had been terribly wounded during the last days of the fighting. She went to see him in the hospital where he lay dying. He tried to raise his torn body. "Fine job!" he whispered, in a last salute.

Joey Guerrero was decorated by the US Government with the Medal of Freedom with Silver Palm—the highest award for war service by a civilian; Cardinal Spellman presented to her a medallion in recognition of "Christian fortitude and concern for fellow sufferers." This photograph was taken when Mrs. Guerrero arrived in the United States for treatment of her leprosy



## What They Call Bravery

*By Carl Wall*

"I SUPPOSE, now that I've got a medal to prove it, I'm what they call brave," said Lieutenant-Colonel Dollard Ménard. "But I'm still trying to work out just what the hell it was that made me brave—or what is called brave, anyway.

"I've thought about it a lot—at night, lying in the Birmingham hospital, coming back across the Atlantic. And I think I've got it pretty straight now."

He paused and held up four fingers. "I think there were four elements in this so-called bravery of mine.

"The first you could call optimism, egoism—or, for that matter, plain thoughtlessness.

"The second was discipline—the training you get in the army.

"Third, blind anger—a desire for revenge.

"The closest I can come to the fourth is a deep-seated feeling of 'What the hell?'

"Now I'll try to show you how it worked:

"The Dieppe show was really just a big Commando raid. I was in command of a battalion of 600—Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal. Our job was to land on the Dieppe beach, help cut away barbed wire, clean out snipers' nests and pillboxes, destroy certain objectives, pick up as many prisoners for Intelligence as we could and provide the rear-guard to cover re-embarkation.

"During the long night trip across the Channel I began thinking



## WHAT THEY CALL BRAVERY

of my men and I couldn't help wondering what they were thinking about. I knew most of them fairly well. They were nearly all French-Canadians like myself. I'd seen snapshots of their wives, kids, mothers and girls.

"I wondered how many of them would be coming back and I started praying—not for myself particularly, but in a general sort of way: 'O God, please let as many of us as possible come back from this.' Something like that.

"You see, I knew and every man in the battalion knew that a lot of us were going to get killed or hurt. But I didn't honestly think that *I* was going to get killed and I don't believe a single man in any of those boats thought *he* was going to get it.

"That's why I say the first element of what they call bravery is a sort of optimism or egoism. That's the thing that brings you up to the action itself—sort of pays your fare to the battlefield.

"Now we'll get down to the second:

"When we got within sight of Dieppe, just before dawn, we knew we were going to get hell all along the line. There were a lot of guns going, and at first you could pick out the sounds and tell what they were. The heavy, dull sound—like thunder—of the artillery behind Dieppe. The ripping clatter of the machine-guns. The boom of the mortars. The whine of the snipers' rifles. And then, as we moved in closer to shore, all these sounds began to merge into one continuous roar that pressed hard on your eardrums.

"Those last 200 yards were bad. The German fire was getting the range of our boats. I had a dry, hot feeling in my throat. I wanted to be doing something—not just sitting in that damned boat.

"The second the boat scraped on the beach, I jumped out and started to follow the sappers through the barbed wire. My immediate objective was a concrete pillbox on top of a twelve-foot parapet about 100 yards up the beach.

"I think I had taken three steps when the first one hit me. You always say a bullet or a piece of shrapnel hits you but the word isn't right. They slam you the way a sledge-hammer slams you. There's

no feeling of sharp pain at first. It jars you so much that you're not sure exactly where you've been hit—or what with.

"This piece of shrapnel hit me high in the right shoulder and knocked me down. I wasn't knocked out but I felt confused and shaken up. I've had exactly the same feeling on the football field after being tackled from behind when I thought I was clear. Stunned, surprised, completely frustrated.

"One of my men came up to me, and I yelled, 'Go on! I'm all right!' Stupid to yell that because I didn't know how I was.

"I managed to get up on to my feet, and then I brought my left hand round and felt my right shoulder. It was damp and sticky. My hand was covered with blood so I knew I was bleeding badly.

"I reached for my first-aid kit, which was strapped to my side just over the left hip. I fumbled with it and then I thought, 'How the hell can I bandage my shoulder with my left hand?'

"All this time I was standing practically upright on a flat stretch of beach that was being raked with rifle, machine-gun, mortar and artillery fire. The second that shrapnel hit me it seemed to shut out everything else. My only thought was to find out whether or not I was all in one piece. But the useless gesture of reaching for my first-aid kit seemed to bring everything back into focus.

"I think it was then that discipline and training came into the picture. The natural instinct of any untrained man on that beach would have been to dig a deep hole in the sand and crawl into it and stay there with his eyes shut. But discipline and training proved strong enough to keep me going. I saw that the pillbox was still holding out, and I began flanking it with a group of my men."

Colonel Ménard touched a purplish furrow high on his right cheek about half an inch from his eye.

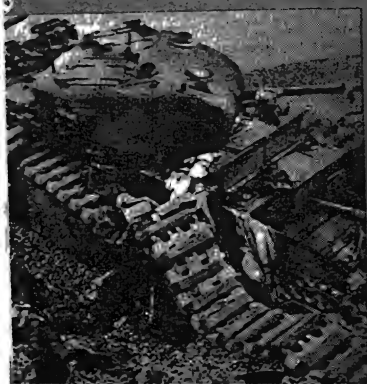
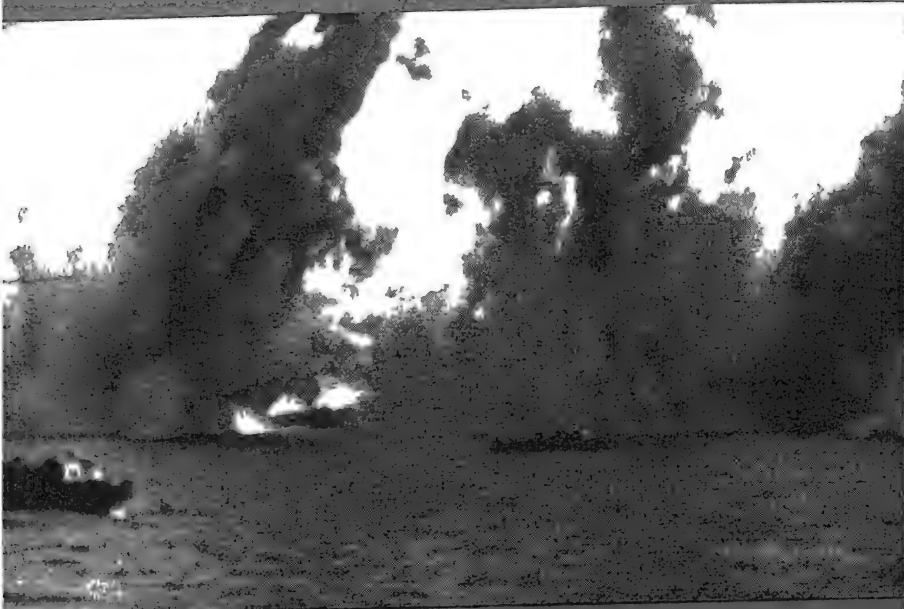
"The second one," he said, "got me about a minute and a half later. There was pain with this one because the shrapnel burnt through the cheek and tore away quite a bit of flesh.

"I brought the back of my left hand round again and felt my cheek. It's funny the way you always instinctively try to feel the



Left: Approaching Dieppe, Canadian troops await the call to action

stations  
Below: The landing craft press on through smoke and waterspouts



Far left: Among the casualties—a man and his tank are left on an enemy beach

Left: Homeward bound, and the troops tend the "walking wounded"

spot where you've been hit. The cheek felt raw as though someone had ripped a fish hook through it.

"I crouched as low as I could and kept moving. We had covered about twenty-five yards when one of my men crumpled up in the sand in front of me. He was a major, and one of my closest friends. I thought a lot of him.

"He was holding both his hands to his stomach. It was a bad place to be hit because only a hospital operating-room could help him. His face was greyish and he was sucking hard for breath.

"I began fumbling for my first-aid kit again. My friend was watching me, but he didn't try to say anything. I managed to get out the packet of three one-quarter-grain morphine tablets. He opened his mouth and put his tongue out a little without taking his eyes off mine. I put a tablet on his tongue and he swallowed it. There was nothing else I could do. He knew it and I knew it.

"I went on towards the pillbox. Up to that point, I'd been more or less brave, let's say, because of discipline and training. I hadn't felt any particular anger because of my own wounds. But now, with my friend lying there, I was so blind angry that it pushed everything else out of my head. I wanted to kill, to get even.

"It was my job to direct the operations of my unit, so I had to control this rage. But it cleared my head, made me think.

"It also seemed to act as a sort of general anaesthetic. When we got up over the parapet, I was hit again—this time by a bullet. It knocked me sprawling backward and I fell on a steel picket, seriously injuring my spine. The bullet went clean through my right wrist and smashed two bones. I barely felt it. And yet, under ordinary circumstances—when you're not keyed up by emotion—I'll bet a man would damned well pass out if a heavy calibre bullet smacked into his wrist like that.

"My rage pulled me along to the pillbox, and I found that our men had cleaned it out nicely with grenades and hand incendiaries. From here I could get a good idea of what was going on and direct the various units by field wireless.

## WHAT THEY CALL BRAVERY

"Within the hour we got our part of the beach fairly well under control. But there were plenty of snipers still about and lots of mortar and shell fire. Shrapnel got me again when I tried to improve my position and get to still higher ground. This time it was my right leg above the knee. It had the same sledge-hammer effect as the first, but I managed to stay on my feet.

"Our men were filtering into the town itself and some of our tanks were on the promenade. I wanted desperately to get in there too. But I could feel myself slipping. I was getting weak.

"I fell, then tried to get up again but I couldn't. My whole right side felt warm and soggy. Then the pain began to come and I started praying, harder and harder. And then I passed out.

"I found out later that a couple of my men carried me back down the beach and got me on a boat. When I came round German planes were trying to machine-gun us and the boat's anti-aircraft batteries were making a hell of a racket about ten feet from my head. I looked round and saw that I was lying on cases of high explosives. I knew that one bullet would blow the whole works sky high but, by that time, I didn't give a damn. I thought, 'What the hell, if they haven't got me by this time they're never going to get me.' That feeling, I think, is the fourth element in what they call bravery.

"I lay there and watched our Spitfires drive the Nazis away as though I were watching a film. We got into the clear after a while and a Royal Navy man came along and gave me a swig of rum. A couple of minutes later, he came running back. 'Pardon me, sir,' he said, 'but have you got a stomach wound?' I shook my head and he looked greatly relieved. 'That's good, sir,' he said, 'because if you did have I shouldn't have given you that rum.'

"That struck me as the funniest thing I'd ever heard. I began laughing and the only thing that finally stopped me was the pain that was burning up my right side.

"You see, I knew I'd been through it and I felt pretty damned good about it."

## **Tunnel to Freedom**

*By Paul Brickhill*

*As told to Allan Michie*

STALAG LUFT III, at Sagan, Germany, half-way between Berlin and Breslau, held 10,000 captured airmen—most of them from the RAF—in the spring of 1943.

In April the camp was enlarged by the addition of a north compound and 700 of us were moved into it. Already, prisoners in the working parties that helped to build the compound had studied its layout and paced off its distances—with tunnels in mind. Escape was the one hope that had kept us going through the numbing months of captivity.

A few of the officers had dug tunnels at other camps, and round them we built "X" our escape organization. Head of "X" was Squadron Leader Roger Bushell, a tall South African who had been a lawyer in London, then a fighter pilot until shot down over Dunkirk. Bushell had already made two remarkable escapes and once had got almost to Switzerland before he was caught.

North compound was 1,000-foot square enclosed by two tall barbed wire fences, parallel and five feet apart, the space between crammed with barbed wire coils. Ten yards inside this barrier was the warning wire; step across it and the guards shot. Numerous sentry towers, fifteen feet high, each with searchlight

Since Paul Brickhill, then a flight-lieutenant of the Royal Australian Air Force, told this story for *The Reader's Digest* in 1946, he has become an internationally known author. Among his books are "Reach for the Sky," the story of Douglas Bader, "Escape or Die" and "The Dam Busters."

## TUNNEL TO FREEDOM

and machine-gun, were manned twenty-four hours a day. Twenty-five yards outside the wire on all four sides of the compound were dense pine woods which cut off any view of the outside world—but equally would cover an escape.

As soon as we moved in, notices were posted asking for volunteers to play cricket and softball. The notices were signed "Big X." Everybody knew what that meant and 500 signed up for the tunnel work. It was decided to start three long tunnels, "Tom," "Dick" and "Harry," in the hope that one would be undetected. We never used the word "tunnels"; too many eavesdropping guards understood English.

Tom was to be dug from block 123 to the wire, 150 feet away, and then on to the shelter of the woods. Dick was to be dug from block 122 towards Tom, so that it could either be joined with Tom's shaft or be dug all the way to the woods. Harry was to begin from block 104, and drive to the woods on the north.

OF COURSE the tunnels would have to start from within our huts. Each hut was 100 feet long, with sleeping quarters, wash-room and small kitchen. The Germans had built these huts about a foot off the ground, so that the guards could look underneath to see if we were up to any funny business. There were usually several of these "ferrets" about, easily spotted by their blue overalls. With torches and long steel probes they searched for hidden trap-doors and tell-tale sand from tunnels.

Three teams were organized, each under a veteran tunneller. Wally Floody, a Canadian mining engineer, was technician-in-chief. Every volunteer was interviewed by the "X" chief of his block. Miners, carpenters and engineers were given the work of tunnelling. Tailors were organized to turn out disguises. Artists set up a forgery shop to fake papers. Any man who spoke fluent German was told to make friends with a ferret, keep him always in sight, cultivate him and eventually try to bribe him to bring in to the compound items needed from the outside.

## TUNNEL TO FREEDOM

One day a new ferret, a particularly zealous one, appeared on duty and we labelled him "Keen Type." Within a month, however, a contact had so cultivated him that he lost his zest for anti-escape vigilance. He would come into the compound, walk straight to his contact's room and say, "Keen Type here. Can I come in?" and then settle down for tea and a biscuit.

Prisoners without any special skills were used either as "penguins," to dispose of sand from the tunnels, or as "stooges," to keep watch on ferrets. For the next year we had 300 stooges working in shifts every day. They reported to "Big S," the head security officer, a tall American colonel.

Once the security system was working we went ahead on the tunnels. The Germans had overlooked one detail. In each hut, the wash-room, kitchen and a small section where there was a stove had concrete floors and stood on brick and concrete foundations which had no openings through which the security guards could probe. These were the places from which we started work.

The first job was to build secret trap-doors. At any hour of the day or night, the Germans would rush into a block shouting, "*Aus, Aus!*" and then upset beds, pry into cupboards, and rip up floor and wall boards, looking for tools, civilian clothing, buttons, nails, anything an escaper might use. Yet ingenuity, backed by three years of weary experience, built trap-doors they couldn't find.

By luck we got hold of a little cement left over from building the camp. A Polish team cast a removable block to replace a slab about two feet square chipped from the floor of block 123. When a little sand and dirt had been rubbed round the edges, nobody could spot it. This was Tom's entrance.

Dick's trap-door in block 122 was the most ingenious. In the wash-room floor was an iron grating through which waste water ran into a concrete well three feet deep. The drain-pipe that led from this sump was so placed that there was always some water in the well. While stooges kept watch outside, the Poles removed the iron grill, bailed out the well and, with a cold chisel acquired by bribing a



## TUNNEL TO FREEDOM

guard, freed the whole concrete slab that formed one side of the well so that it was removable at will. When the slab was in place and the cracks sealed with soap, the waste water rapidly accumulated, making everything look most unsuspicious.

Harry's entrance was also tricky. The tall heating stove in room 23 of block 104 stood on tiles imbedded in a concrete base about four feet square. The men moved the stove back, chipped the tiles free and reset them in a concrete trap-door which looked precisely like the original base. Five of the tiles cracked in the process. They were replaced by tiles stolen from a cookhouse in East compound and smuggled in to us.

It had been a risky business. Harry's floor was up for about ten days in all, hidden from the ferrets only by a carelessly placed mattress, but we got away with it.

Now we were set for the more dangerous business of tunnelling. The distances, direction and angles of the three tunnels had been computed by rough trigonometry. We had learned that German sound detectors could hear nothing below twenty-five feet, so we decided to sink shafts thirty feet straight down from the three trap-doors before heading for the woods.

THE LIGHT, sandy soil was easy to dig, but it needed almost solid shoring. As a start we made each man provide two bed slats. This first levy wasn't too bad but by the time the fifth and sixth levies took more slats, it was hard to sleep.

Early in May 1943, the first sand was cut away. Teams worked from just after morning roll-call right through to the evening roll-call with only a short break for lunch.

The penguins had the troublesome job of disposing of the bright yellow sand, which showed up glaringly if dumped on the dun-coloured soil above ground. Some of the sand could be stirred into the soil of our tiny gardens, but that didn't begin to solve the problem. So we took dozens of small towels and sewed them into sausage-shaped sacks. A penguin would hang one of these, filled with sand,

in each trouser-leg and wander casually out to the playing ground. There stooges would be staging boxing matches, volleyball games or pretended brawls. Once in among the men the penguin, hands in pockets, would pull strings that freed pins at the bottom of the sausage sacks and let the sand trickle to the ground. Scores of scuffling feet would quickly discolour it and trample it into the surface. When we were going well, we kept 150 penguins busy disposing of tons of sand under the noses of the ferrets.

The tunnels were scooped out with little coal shovels and iron scrapers made from our cooking-stoves. The bores were about two feet square and shored with box frames made of bed slats, notched to fit. We saved our few nails to build shaft ladders.

AT THE BASE of each shaft, roomy chambers were dug for the use of carpenters and fitters and for the ventilating equipment. One day, when three diggers were thus enlarging the base of Dick's shaft, a frame began to leak sand. In a matter of seconds the leak became an avalanche. Two diggers scrambled out, but the third, Wally Floody, was almost smothered before he was got out. Dick's shaft filled almost to the top, but the job was grimly done again.

Veterans had learned that you could not tunnel far without fresh air, and that holes poked up to the surface were not adequate. By luck, a copy of a modern-mechanics type of magazine came into camp and it contained an article which described a home-made air pump. We promptly set to work to make one.

Our "tin bashers" collected Red Cross dried milk tins, cut off the ends and fitted the cylinders together to build pipe. They wrapped the joints with German propaganda newspapers. The pipe was laid in a ditch along the tunnel floor and covered with sand. At the far end was a nozzle which delivered fresh air. The air was forced through the pipe by shifts of pumpers who operated a bellows constructed from kit bags. This first outfit worked perfectly and we promptly built two more. Now we could close the trap-doors and work without fear of interruption from the ferrets.

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Our electrical specialists rounded up odd bits of wiring left behind by the builders. Then they surreptitiously rearranged the camp wiring, gaining a few score feet in the process. They wired the three shafts and made hidden connexions to the camp circuit. We stole bulbs from corridors and we had light to dig by. When sometimes the Germans neglected to switch on the power during the day, we used home-made lamps, tin cans with pyjama cord wicks burning in margarine. They were a bit smelly.

The digging teams evolved a rigid system. Number one digger lay full length on his side and one elbow, hacking away at the tunnel face and pushing the sand back towards his feet. Number two lay facing the other way, his legs overlapping number one's. He collected the sand in special boxes which were placed on trolleys and hauled by home-made ropes back to the shaft.

These trolleys, strong enough to carry two sand boxes or one man, were first-class installations. They had carved flanged wooden wheels fitted with "tyres" cut from tin cans. The hubs even had ball bearings, smuggled in by a tame ferret. The track rails were made from barrack mouldings. When the tunnels became long, the diggers sprawled on the trolleys and pushed their way to the working face.

At times it was stifling hot in the hole. Men worked naked or in the hated long underpants issued to prisoners. Dirt stains on their outer clothes would have given the show away. Up above we rigged rough showers where the diggers could quickly wash off all tell-tale sand before roll-calls.

The diggers learned to take sand falls in their stride. The only warning would be a slight rustle and then the number one digger would be buried under a pile of suffocating sand which smothered lamps and air line. Number two man would have to work fast to get him out.

BY THE END of May, a month after digging commenced, each of the three tunnels was about seventy feet long. We were nearly into summer, when escapers could sleep out and live off the land.

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The X leaders decided to concentrate on Tom, which had least distance to go. A week later they set up the first "half-way house" at the 100-foot mark. This was a little chamber built from the end frames of our wooden bunks. In it men could turn round without having to go back to the shaft. Calculations were that Tom's half-way house was just under the warning wire. That left 100 feet to go to get just inside the wood.

Other X groups were busily preparing the equipment we'd need. Our forgery department of fifty men turned out phoney passports and identity cards. We called it "Dean & Dawson," after the British travel agency.

Some of our guards could be tempted with a gift of coffee or chocolate, and once they had smuggled in one item they couldn't refuse more, because we might give them away to the commandant. In this way we got coloured inks, pens, brushes, special types of paper, magnets to make compasses, radio parts to build our illegal receiver on which we got daily news bulletins, a camera and equipment to make photos for our fake passports, hammers, saws, pliers, nails and maps.

A few guards, smoothly cultivated by our linguists, were even persuaded to lend us their *Zahlbuch*, combined paybook and identity card, while our forgers made copies. The faking of documents was an incredibly finicky job. Whole sheets of simulated type-writing were drawn by hand, complete with overtyping, imperfect letters and bad shifts. Other documents called for lines of close print or endless whorls of "engraving." Forgers ripped fine paper from Bibles and linen covers from books to make identification books. One document needed in crossing frontiers was so complicated that it would take a skilled forger five hours a day for a month to make one. Letterheads were "embossed" with toothbrush handles. German eagle and swastika stamps were cut from rubber boot heels. Altogether, "Dean & Dawson" outfitted the escapers with more than 400 forged documents.

An Australian pilot made compasses—the cases from melted

gramophone records, the glasses from broken windows, the needles from sewing needles rubbed on a magnet.

In the tailor's shop, sixty men made civilian clothes out of RAF uniforms and turned out close copies of Luftwaffe uniforms. Escapers caught wearing exact copies would be shot as spies, but by the Geneva Convention we could use imitations.

Half a dozen map makers traced a variety of maps and ran copies off on a makeshift duplicator. They made the gelatine from fruit jelly, the ink from the crushed lead of indelible pencils.

WE LEARNED the Americans were to be moved in six weeks to a separate compound and they had put in a lot of work on the tunnels. So evening shifts were added to hurry things up. We had to take greater chances with sand. More of it was dug into our vegetable gardens and some scattered near the upturned soil round a new camp theatre. One day a probing ferret turned over some bright yellow sand in a garden. This touched off a series of frantic but futile searches. The Germans dug a trench between block 123 and the wire, but it was not deep enough to reveal Tom.

By the end of June we calculated that Tom had reached just under the edge of the wood and we prepared to dig a shaft straight up to the surface. Just then a horde of Germans suddenly appeared and began to cut away the trees! It was actually mere coincidence; they had decided to build a new compound there. They chopped the trees back for fifty yards, but time for the Americans was short and it was decided to break Tom out anyway, and let the escapers crawl the rest of the way to cover.

We had so much sand coming up that we were desperate. Someone suggested storing it temporarily in Dick. Every evening a stream of penguins carrying cardboard Red Cross boxes strolled across to Dick's hut and dumped sand down the shaft. Even that was not enough. The X leaders decided to take a long chance, store sand in Red Cross boxes under our beds and hope that the Germans wouldn't find it until it could be properly disposed of.

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Tom was now 260 feet long, with a few yards to go to its goal. Bushell decided to lie low for a few days to allay suspicion. Then ferrets found the boxes of sand in our huts. Heavy transport wagons were brought into camp and trundled all round in an effort to collapse any tunnels we might have. They only wrecked our vegetable gardens.

A day or so later, in a last suspicious search of block 123, a ferret accidentally jabbed his probe into the edge of Tom's trap-door.

That was the end of Tom.

The ferrets couldn't find how to open the trap, so they broke it in. They dynamited Tom and incidentally blew up part of the roof of block 123. They were so relieved at discovering Tom that they took no reprisals or even precautions.

A mass meeting decided that work would go ahead on Dick and Harry. However, it was deemed wise to do no more until winter, when we assumed vigilance would slacken because it is a bad season for escapes.

At the end of August 1943 the Americans were moved to their new compound and we threw a great party on home-brewed raisin wine as a farewell.

While we were waiting for winter, it was decided to try some above-ground escapes. For one of them, the carpenters made imitation German rifles out of wood—they got the exact measurements by sneaking up behind guards with callipers and measuring the parts. These they leaded with pencil to resemble metal and polished until you couldn't tell them from the real thing. Periodically the Germans escorted small parties of prisoners through the gates for delousing our clothes and the idea was to stage an unofficial delousing party of our own. Three prisoners, disguised as Luftwaffe *Unteroffiziers*, took twenty-four other prisoners in tow, passed the inspection at the gate and made off into the woods. A few minutes later six senior officers, including the Battle of Britain fighter ace, Bob Stanford Tuck, tried to get through but were detected.

We were all forced to stand on parade for nearly seven hours

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while the three missing men were identified. Later, all were rounded up. One man, a fluent Spanish speaker, who posed as a foreign worker, got to Czechoslovakia and then by train almost to the Swiss border, where he got out and walked right across a narrow strip of Swiss territory without knowing it and back again into Germany, where a frontier guard nabbed him. The other two got to a Luftwaffe airfield, sneaked into an old Junkers trainer and were just warming up the engine when a German pilot coincidentally came along to fly it and caught them.

We were ready to start tunnelling again early in 1944. Dick was almost filled in with Tom's sand, and anyway the Germans had started to build a new compound where Dick was to have broken out. That left Harry. But snow lay deep on the ground and sand disposal stumped us. One of the tunnellers suggested we put it under the theatre. He had noticed the Germans never looked there.

We had built the theatre ourselves and taken care to leave no openings for the ferrets to peep through. Underneath was a deep excavation. Our engineers adjusted one seat so that it swung back on hinges and under it they cut a trap-door. Into this the penguins dumped kit bags full of sand every night.

THREE TEAMS, ten veteran diggers in each team, pushed Harry ahead up to twelve feet per day. By the end of January, the first "half-way house" was built 100 feet out. The planners had calculated that 300 feet of tunnel in all would bring us out into the shelter of the trees.

It was a long dig, and conditions were getting worse. The ground was cold and damp. Every digger suffered continuously from colds. Most of them were spitting black from breathing the fumes of our fat lamps; we had run out of electric wire. Sand falls kept occurring nearly every day.

But by mid-February another 100 feet had been dug and the second half-way house was put in. This was just about under the far boundary wire; there was 100 feet still to go.

## TUNNEL TO FREEDOM

Then we got a small break. German workmen hooking up loudspeakers laid down two large coils of electric wire, intending to use them in a few minutes. A prisoner calmly walked off with one coil. A mock fight quickly broke out and in the confusion we got the second coil. The German workmen were afraid to report the loss. (At the end, when the Gestapo found the wire in Harry, three of them were shot.)

That haul gave us 600 feet of wiring, enough for lights right up to the digging face.

THE CHIEF FERRET again became suspicious. Wally Floody, our chief penguin, our security chief and half a dozen of the key diggers were suddenly transferred to a compound several miles away. That was a blow. It was bad enough losing key men, but it was worse that the Germans obviously knew we were up to something.

By 8th March 1944, the final 100-foot section was dug and a chamber excavated at the end. In four days four of the best diggers carved straight upward, fitting ladders to the side as they progressed, until they struck pine-tree roots. They estimated that they were about two feet below the surface, just inside the wood. They boarded over the top of the shaft and left the remainder to be dug on the night of the break. By 14th March the tunnel was ready. The trap-door was closed and its sides cemented up to wait for milder weather and a night suitable for our getaway.

The very next day the chief ferret sent his men to search block 104. One of them even ran his probe round the cement that sealed Harry's trap-door. It held.

About 500 men had worked on the tunnels but we estimated that only 220 would be able to pass through it during the hours of darkness. Bushell was allowed to draw up a list of sixty workers, twenty more were nominated by secret ballot because of their work on the project, and 140 names were drawn out of a hat.

The lucky ones began their preparations. We had enough money to buy train tickets for forty men; the rest were to walk across



country. Bushell and other men who'd been loose in Germany conducted lectures, giving hints and advice. A Czech pilot described the border mountains of Czechoslovakia, sixty miles away, for which most of the foot travellers intended to head.

After roll-call on the morning of Friday, 24th March, Roger Bushell announced that the escape would take place that night. There was six inches of snow on the ground, which was not good, but there would be no moon. Our meteorologist thought there would be a wind to drown suspicious noises.

The "Dean & Dawson" boys filled in their forged documents and stamped them with the correct date, which of course couldn't have been done until then. Some escapers were to go as foreign workers, others as neutrals, others as German officials, soldiers and civilians—and each man's papers had to fit his story.

A digger went out to Harry's end to see how far we had to go to break through. When he jabbed a stick upward three inches, he struck daylight, much to his surprise. At least, it seemed, there wouldn't be any difficulty in getting to the surface.

We laid blankets at the bottom of the shafts to deaden sounds and nailed planks on the trolleys so the escapers could lie on them and be pulled along. When darkness came the escapers put on their disguises. Our improvised iron rations were issued, a revolting but nourishing combination of grated chocolate, oatmeal, crushed biscuits, vitamin pills, barley, dried milk and other concentrated foods all boiled together.

BY HALF PAST EIGHT it was announced that all was ready. Ten minutes later the first escaper went down the ladder, well turned out in a civilian suit and carrying a home-made brief-case. The second, dressed as a workman, followed on his heels. Roger Bushell, carrying an attaché-case and looking like a smart businessman in his grey herring-bone lounge suit, black overcoat and dark hat, went down among the first five.

There was a bad wait when the first man was unable to prise the

## TUNNEL TO FREEDOM

roof boards loose. It was almost an hour, an agonizing time for the men lying along the tunnel, before the swollen boards came loose and the earth was removed. Up above twinkled a few stars and down the shaft came the sweet fresh air of freedom.

But when the digger cautiously stuck his head out he got a shock. Instead of being just inside the woods the hole was ten feet short of the trees and its gaping opening was a bare fifteen yards from a sentry tower.

We were stunned when he broke the news. Would the work of 500 men for more than a year end in complete failure. But the men were in no mood to be stopped. To go now was risky. To wait a month for the next moonless period and in the meantime dig another thirty feet of tunnel was equally risky. Besides, the forged papers were all dated and would have to be redone. That decided it.

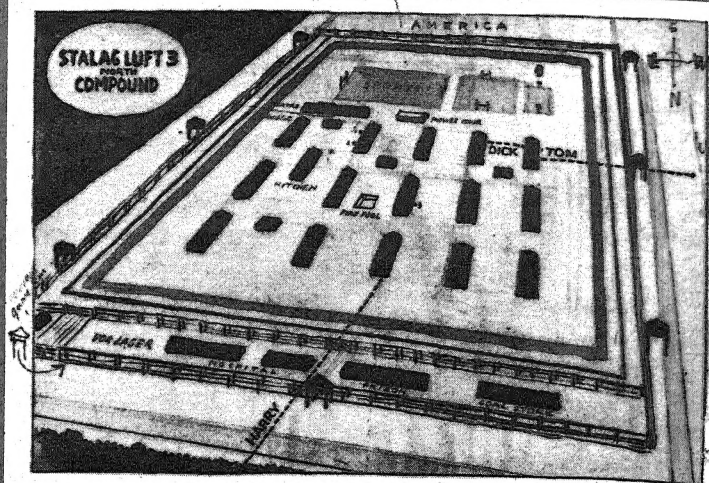
The first man up crawled to a brushwood fence, paying out a rope by which he could signal when it was safe for the next man to emerge. The sentry in the tower paid no attention to the wood but played his searchlight on the barbed wire fence and compound. Two other sentries patrolled back and forth along the wire. When both were out of sight the rope was tugged and the second man slipped across into the wood.

It took more than an hour for the first twenty to make it. They were all going by train, and they headed for the Sagan railway station a quarter of a mile away. From time-tables smuggled in by guards we knew exactly when the trains were due.

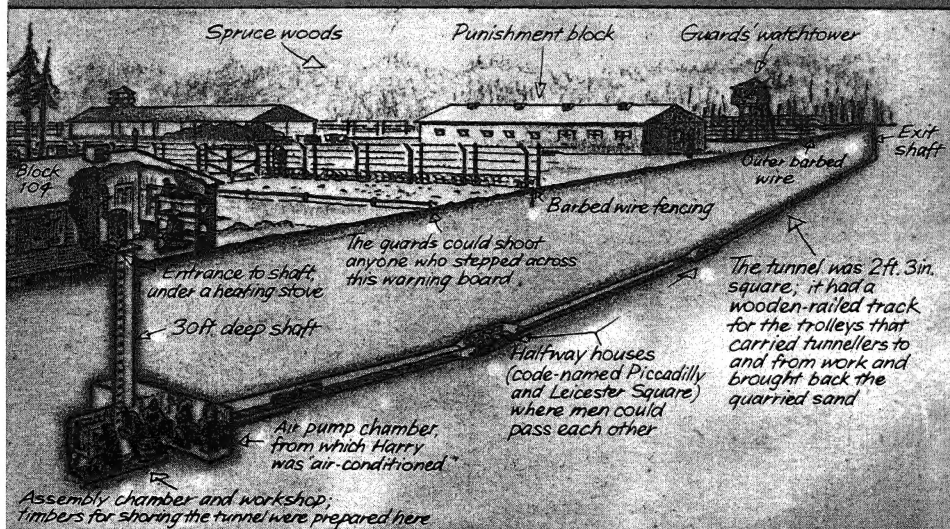
Back in block 104 the initial delay had been terrible. Obviously something had gone wrong, but what? Escapers sat about, a queer collection of well-dressed civilians, workmen and a German corporal, hoping that ferrets would not appear. Just after half past nine the men at the trap-door felt a blast of cold air. It could only mean that we'd broken out. A muffled cheer went round the block.

There were other interruptions. Two bad sand falls held up the show for about an hour and a half in all. Sometimes the trolleys left their rails—more delays. Men going out with suit-cases or blankets

This portfolio of illustrations comes from the collection of Flight-Lieutenant Ley Kenyon, DFC, who was a member of the escape organization at Stalag Luft III. An art teacher by profession, he kept the "official" record of the tunnelling project, and his drawings, were hidden in the camp. Kenyon was one of the seventy-six prisoners who escaped on 24th March 1944, but he was recaptured within half a mile of the camp



*The north compound; 1,400 of us lived here*



*At 320 ft, Harry was the longest escape tunnel built in either of the world wars*





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